ELTHAM LIBRARY

WOOLWICH PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

WOOLWICH CENTRAL LIBRARY.

The Lending Library shall be open from 10 a.m. until 9 p.m. every week day except Wednesday, when it shall close at 1 p.m.

The time allowed for reading each issue, whether one volume or more, is 14 days. For any book not returned within that period, a fine shall be paid of one penny for the first week or portion of a week, and twopence for each succeeding week or portion of a week.

No book can be issued unless the borrower's ticket is presented or a book returned. No book can be exchanged on the day of issue.

Any change in the residence of borrowers or their guarantors must be notified to the Librarian within one week of such change.

Borrowers leaving the Borough or ceasing to use the libraries are required to return their tickets to the Librarian, otherwise they and their guarantors will be held responsible for all liabilities incurred.

Borrowers are required to keep the books clean, to refrain from turning down the leaves, or making pencil or other marks upon them. They must take the earliest opportunity of reporting any damage or injury done to the books they receive; otherwise they will be held accountable for the same. In wet weather borrowers are required to protect the books in their transit to and from the Libraries.

Borrowers should carefully read the Rules, &c., which are printed in the catalogues, and from which the above are abstracts. See especially Rule 31 respecting Infectious Diseases, non-compliance with which involves a penalty of £5.

RESERV

WOO RARIES

This book e the last date
stamped l be charged for
the first ue and **twopence**
for each veek. Borrowers
should n the Libraries.

54

54

1954

EP 1955

21 MAR 1953

12 NOV 1955

4 APR 1953

AUG 1963

28 NOV 1953

6 MAR 1954

20 MAR 1954

3 APR 1954

Z
Due
8 NOV 1984

THE ODYSSEY OF HOMER.

THE

ODYSSEY OF HOMER

DONE INTO ENGLISH VERSE

BY

WILLIAM MORRIS,

AUTHOR OF THE EARTHLY PARADISE.

LONDON:

REEVES & TURNER, 196 STRAND.

MDCCCLXXXVII.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/odysseyofhomer0000will_w1z4

883.1 3941

CONTENTS.

BOOK I.

PAGE

The Gods ordain the Return of Odysseus: Pallas goes to Ithaca and in the Likeness of Mentes heartens up Telemachus, and bids him call a Meeting of Men to lay his Grievance against the Wooers, and then to take Ship to Pylos and Sparta seeking Tidings of his Father 1

BOOK II.

The Meeting of Folk in Ithaca: the masterful and proud words of the Wooers. Zeus sends a Token. Telemachus takes ship for Pylos 17

BOOK III.

Telemachus sails to Pylos, and there sees Nestor, who tells him of Agamemnon and Menelaus, and sends him on to Sparta in the company of Pisistratus his Son 33

BOOK IV.

Telemachus cometh with Pisistratus, Son of Nestor, to Menelaus at Sparta, and hath some tidings of his Father. The Wooers waylay Telemachus' return. Penelope hath a Dream sent for her solace by Athene 51

BOOK V.

A Council of the Gods. Hermes sent to Calypso to bid her further the Return of Odysseus. Odysseus sails away on a Raft. He is wrecked in the sea hard on Phæacia and swims ashore there . 82

BOOK VI.

PAGE

Odysseus is awakened by Nausicaä, the Daughter of Alcinoüs, King of the Phæacians, and by her is brought to the City and the Palace of her Father 100

BOOK VII.

Odysseus comes to the Phæacian City and the House of Alcinoüs, where he is received as a Suppliant and Guest, and Alcinoüs promises to further him on his way home on the morrow . 112

BOOK VIII.

Alcinoüs bringeth Odysseus to the Assembly, and biddeth men play before Odysseus till the time is come for his departure: Demodocus the Minstrel telleth the Tale of Hephæstus and the Love of Ares and Aphrodite: great gifts are given to Odysseus: he weepeth at the Song of Demodocus concerning the Wooden Horse: Alcinoüs perceiveth it and prayeth him to tell his Story 125

BOOK IX.

Odysseus telleth of his Wayfarings: how he fought with the Cicones: how he came to the Land of the Lotus-eaters: how he came unto the Land of the Cyclops and of his dealings with Polyphemus there 147

BOOK X.

Odysseus cometh to Æolus, who giveth him a fair wind, whereby he is borne close to Ithaca, but by the folly of his Folk is driven back thence to Æolus again: thence he cometh to the Læstrygons, and by them loseth the more part of his ships and men: sailing thence they come to Ææa, where dwelt Circe, whose sorcery is told of, and how Odysseus dwelt with her a whole year, when she bade him go visit the Land of the Dead before he set out for home again 168

BOOK XI.

PAGE

Odysseus fareth beyond the Ocean-stream and cometh to the Realm and House of Hades, and there hath counsel of Tiresias the Theban: there also he seeth the Ghost of Elpenor, but late dead, and the Ghost of his Mother, and of many men and women of renown 190

BOOK XII.

Odysseus cometh back to Ææa again, and Circe giveth him counsel concerning his Road: he passeth by the Sirens and heareth their Song: he cometh by Scylla and Charybdis, and loseth to Scylla six of his men. Thence they come to the Island of the Sun, and despite of warnings his fellows slay and eat of the Kine of the Sun. Wherefore is the ship wrecked in mid-sea, and all the shipmen perish save Odysseus, who barely saves himself from Charybdis, whence he is carried to the Isle of Ogygia, and cherished there by Calypso as is aforesaid 214

BOOK XIII.

Odysseus is carried over to Ithaca by the Phæacians, and laid sleeping in his own land amidst his gifts: awaking he knows not the country, till Athene, at first in the likeness of a Shepherd and then as a Woman, cometh to him: she biddeth him seek out Eumæus his swineherd, and changeth his aspect to the similitude of an old gangrel man so that he may not be known . . . 231

BOOK XIV.

Odysseus cometh to the house of Eumæus the swineherd in the shape of an old staff-carle, and is kindly entertained of him: he telleth Eumæus of the return of Odysseus, but hath no credence of him: therewith he telleth him a feigned tale of himself: and so to supper and bed in the house of Eumæus 247

BOOK XV.

PAGE

Telemachus, egged on by Athene, departeth homewards from Lacedæmon; he falleth in with Theoclymenus the seer on the way, and cometh safely to Ithaca, where he goeth a-land by himself in the country-side, and sendeth the ship home to the town with his fellows. Meanwhile Eumæus telleth his tale to Odysseus of how he was stolen from home when he was little, and sold into thraldom . 266

BOOK XVI.

Telemachus cometh to the booth of the swineherd, and sendeth him to the town with tidings to Penelope. Odysseus maketh himself known to his Son. The crew of Telemachus bring the ship to haven by the town; and in likewise those who waylaid him come back home. The Wooers take counsel concerning Telemachus' safe return, and Penelope upbraideth them for their ill-doings. Eumæus cometh back to Telemachus at the booth, and telleth of the speeding of his message 287

BOOK XVII.

Telemachus goeth to the town and telleth of himself to his Mother. Eumæus bringeth Odysseus to his own house, which he entereth alone in the likeness of a beggar; he beggeth broken victual therein, and is evilly entreated by Antinoüs 305

BOOK XVIII.

Odysseus being mocked by the beggar Irus, and threatened by him, overcomes him in buffets. The Wooers give gifts to Penelope. The handmaid Melantho and Eurymachus mock Odysseus . . 328

BOOK XIX.

PAGE

Odysseus and Telemachus bear off the weapons from the hall, and lay them in the treasury. Odysseus speaketh with Penelope, and with Euryclea the nurse, who, bathing his feet, knoweth him by the scar of the ancient hurt that he gat in the hunting of the boar 344

BOOK XX.

Herein is told of signs and wonders in and about the house of Odysseus 366

BOOK XXI.

Herein is told of the trial of the bending of the bow, and the shooting through the axes 381

BOOK XXII.

Herein is told of the slaying of the Wooers in the house of Odysseus . 397

BOOK XXIII.

Odysseus maketh himself known to his wife Penelope . . . 416

BOOK XXIV.

The Ghosts of the Wooers are brought by Hermes to the house of Hades. Odysseus makes himself known to his father Laertes. Eupeithes takes up the feud for his son Antinoüs: he is slain by Laertes, and peace is made by the will of Zeus and Athene . . 430

THE

ODYSSEY OF HOMER.

BOOK I.

ARGUMENT.

THE GODS ORDAIN THE RETURN OF ODYSSEUS: PALLAS GOES TO ITHACA AND IN THE LIKENESS OF MENTES HEARTENS UP TELEMACHUS, AND BIDS HIM CALL A MEETING OF MEN TO LAY HIS GRIEVANCE AGAINST THE WOOERS, AND THEN TO TAKE SHIP TO PYLOS AND SPARTA SEEKING TIDINGS OF HIS FATHER.

TELL me, O Muse, of the Shifty, the man who wandered afar,
After the Holy Burg, Troy-town, he had wasted with war;
He saw the towns of menfolk, and the mind of men did he learn;
As he warded his life in the world, and his fellow-farers' return,
Many a grief of heart on the deep-sea flood he bore,
Nor yet might he save his fellows, for all that he longed for it sore.
They died of their own souls' folly, for witless as they were
They ate up the beasts of the Sun, the Rider of the Air,
And he took away from them all their dear returning day;
O Goddess, O daughter of Zeus, from whencesoever ye may,
Gather the tale, and tell it, yea even to us at the last!

Now all the other heroes, who forth from the warfare passed
And fled from sheer destruction and 'scaped each man his bane,

Saved from the sea and the battle, at home they sat full fain;
But him alone, Odysseus, sore yearning after the strife
To get him back to his homestead, sore yearning for his wife,
Did the noble nymph Calypso, the Godhead's glory, hoard
In the hollow rocky places; for she longed for him for lord,
Yea and e'en when the circling seasons had brought the year to hand,
Wherein the Gods had doomed it that he should reach his land,
E'en Ithaca his homestead, not even then was he,
Though amidst his kin and his people, of heavy trouble free.

Know now, that of all the God-folk there was none but pitied him,
Save that Poseidon only was with ceaseless wrath abrim
Against the God-like Hero from his house and his home shut out.
But he to the Æthiopians e'en now was gone about,
The far-dwellers outmost of menfolk; and these are sundered atwain,
Some dwell where the High-rider setteth, and some where he riseth again.
There then of bulls and of rams would he gather an hundred-fold,
And he sat him adown rejoicing and noble feast did hold.
But the rest in the hall were gathered of Zeus the Olympian lord.
So the Father of Gods and of men amidst them took up the word,
For mindful in heart was he of Ægisthus the noble one,
He that was slain of Orestes far-famed, Agamemnon's son.
Thus then to the deathless he spake, these things remembering still.

"Out on it! how do the menfolk to the Gods lay all their ill,
And say that of us it cometh; when they themselves indeed
Gain griefs from their own souls' folly beyond the fateful meed.
E'en as of late Ægisthus must wed Atrides' wife
In Doom's despite, and must slay him returning home from the strife.
Though his end therefrom he wotted, and thereof we warned him plain,
Sending him Hermes withal, the keen-eyed Argus-bane,

Bidding him slay not the man, nor woo the wife to his bed.
'For vengeance shall come from Orestes for the son of Atreus dead
When the child is waxen a man and longeth his land to win:'
So spake Hermes, but nought prevailed with Ægisthus herein,
Despite of his goodly counsel. But now for all hath he paid."

Therewith the Grey-eyed, the Goddess, Athene answered and said,
"O Father, O Son of Cronos, O Highest of all that is high!
In a doom and a death most fitting indeed that man doth lie,
And e'en so may all men perish such deeds as this who earn!
But lo for the wise Odysseus as now my heart doth burn.
Luckless, aloof from his folk, long-lasting woe bears he
In an isle of the circling Ocean, and the navel of the Sea,
In an isle by trees grown over: in that house a Goddess dwells
Daughter of Atlas the baleful, who knoweth all ocean wells
Whereso they be, and moreover he holdeth in his hand
The long-wrought pillars that sunder the heavens from the earthly land.
There the hapless man in sorrow this Atlas' Daughter hoards
And his heart for ever wooeth with soft and wheedling words
That of Ithaca nought he may mind him; but Odysseus longeth to see,
If it were but the smoke a-leaping from the land where he would be;
And now he yearneth for death. Nor yet doth thy dear heart
Heed aught of this, Olympian. But Odysseus for his part
Wrought he not holy deeds, and gifts to give thee joy
By the side of the ships of the Argives before wide-spreading Troy?
Then why doth thine anger O Zeus so sore against him drift?"

But to her made answer Zeus, the Lord that driveth the lift:
"O thou my child! what a word from the wall of thy teeth hath sped!
How should I ever forget Odysseus' goodlihead?
Whose mind overgoes all mortals, and hallowed gifts hath he given

To the deathless folk of the Gods, the lords of the wide-spread heaven.
But Poseidon Girdler of Earth his anger will not slake
Because of the eye bereft, and the blinded Cyclops' sake,
Polyphemus great as a god, whose might is far before
All others of the Cyclops: but him Thoosa bore
Daughter of Phorcys, the lord of the untilled salt-sea plain;
For with Poseidon she lay in the hollow rocks of the main.
Now therefore the Shaker of Earth, though the man he will not slay,
From the father-land of his folk still driveth him ever to stray.
But come! let us compass his ways, and bring his returning about,
So that at last Poseidon may let his wrath die out:
For nought is his might so mighty that one 'gainst all may strive,
E'en he alone contending with the Gods for ever alive."

Therewith the Grey-eyed, the Goddess, Athene took up the word.
"O Father, O Son of Cronos, O highest of every lord,
If the happy Gods of the heavens indeed of this are fain,
Of the wise Odysseus coming to his very home again,
Then speed we the Slayer of Argus, e'en Hermes the Flitter, to go
Unto the isle Ogygia, our steadfast will to show
To the fair-haired nymph Calypso as swiftly as he may:
E'en return for Odysseus the patient, and he straight to go on his way.
But for me unto Ithaca now shall I wend me, that I the more
May stir up the son to be keen, and his heart with stoutness store,
That he the long-haired Achæans may call to a meeting day
To bid the Wooers forbear, even the men who slaughter and slay
His huddled sheep and his oxen, the shambling knock-kneed band;
And to Sparta will I send him and to Pylos of the sand,
To seek of his father's home-coming if tidings he may hear,
So that fair fame among folk and full goodly he may bear."

She spake, and under her feet the lovely shoes she tied,
Deathless and golden they are; over the wet sea wide
And the boundless earth they waft her as the breath of the winds that pass.
Then she took the mighty spear, headed and sharp with brass,
Heavy and great and stubborn, wherewith the ranks of men
The Zeus-born Maiden quelleth, and angry is she then.
Down she glanced from the heights of Olympus, and stayed her in the land
And the isle of the Ithacan people: by Odysseus' door did she stand,
On the threshold of the forecourt, in her palm a brazen spear,
And the likeness of Mentes the stranger, the Taphian Chief did she bear.
There she found the high-souled Wooers, and there at the tables they played,
Before the doors of the homestead, and game and glee they made
As they sat on the hides of the oxen which they themselves had slain;
And there with them were the henchmen and the lads of service fain,
Who blent the wine with the water and bowls for the Wooers poured;
And some with hole-pierced sponges made clean each feasting board,
And plenteous flesh were they shearing as the boards for the feast they laid.

But Telemachus the godlike he first beheld the maid;
For he sat among the Wooers, his dear heart sore downcast,
And his mind beheld his father might he but come at last
And send those Wooers scattering about the homestead fair,
And gain his goods and his glory and be lord and master there.
Thus as he sat and pondered, on the Maid he set his eyes
And wended him straight to the fore-doors, and wrath in his soul did arise
That a guest in the door should be standing so long: so he drew anear
And took therewith her right-hand, and took the brazen spear,
And fell to speech moreover and set these words on the wing:
"Greeting, O guest, and welcome! thou shalt tell us of the thing
Thou needest, e'en as it is, when thou hast tasted of meat."

He led her on as he spake, and Pallas followed his feet;
But against a long-wrought pillar he set the spear that he bore
Within the well-sleeked spear-rack, wherein were many more
Of the spears of that Odysseus who bore so many an ill.
Then to a chair he brought her fair-wrought with crafty skill,
And spread the linen thereunder, and the stool beneath her feet;
And by her apart from the Wooers he set his painted seat,
For fear that the guest should be troubled by all the din and cry,
And should loathe his meat amid men so masterful and high;
And withal of his father's straying he would ask if aught might be told.

Now a maid brought in the water in a ewer fair-wrought of gold,
And over the silver bowl for the washing of hands she poured,
And therewithal beside them set out the polished board.
Then a goodwife set before them the baken bread of wheat,
And of suchlike as was handy gave forth things good to eat.
Till the server upbore the trenchers of divers flesh and good,
And served it forth, and beside them the golden beakers stood;
And to and fro went the henchman and amidst them poured the wine.

Then in came the masterful Wooers, and in an ordered line
They sat them adown in the hall on noble bench and chair,
And over their hands the henchmen poured forth the water fair.
In wicker maunds the handmaids fair wheaten bread piled up,
And the serving-lads were crowning with drink each bowl and cup.
So they stretched out their hands to the board and the meat that before
[them lay.
But when of meat and of drink they had worn the longing away,
The care of other matters in the Wooers' hearts had place;
Yea even the song and the dance, the banquet's glory and grace.
So in the hand of Phemius a harp the herald set,

Perforce he sang to the Wooers, and was their minstrel yet.
So his hands with the harp were dealing and he smote the song awake.

Now therewithal to the Grey-eyed a word Telemachus spake,
Holding his head to her head that the others might not hear:
"Dear guest, for the word that I speak what anger wilt thou bear?
Such men of such things have heed, the harp and the singing sweet,
Since the life and the goods of another all unavenged they eat,
Whose white bones somewhere are wasting in the mainland rain may be,
Or the billows roll them around and around in the salt of the sea,
And yet if they knew him returning to this Ithacan land on a day
Full surely each of these wooers for the speedy foot would pray
Rather than increase of gold and the gain of goodly weed.
—He is dead by an evil doom, and for us is no cherishing rede;
Nay, not though perchance some man of the earth-dwelling folk should say
That he yet shall come again—stark dead is his home-coming day.
But come now, tell me of this and speak to me closely herein,
From whence thou art of menfolk, and what is thy city and kin?
In what manner of keel didst thou come? What like did the seafarers fare
Who hither to Ithaca brought thee, and what gave they out that they were?
Since afoot and aland, meseemeth, thou camest to us not.
Tell all in truth and in deed, for clearly would I wot
If thou be a new-come guest, or the homestead's wonted friend;
For many indeed were the strangers that would to usward wend;
Since forsooth he would be dealing with many a manner of men."

But the Grey-eyed, the Goddess, Athene thus spake and answered again:
"Yea of all shall I do thee to wit as clear as it may be done.
For know that I am Mentes, the wise Anchialus' son,
And lord am I of the Taphians, the lovers of the oar.
So with ship and with fellow-farers as now am I come to shore.

But to men of alien speech I sail o'er the wine-dark sea
To Temesa seeking for brass, and bright iron I bear with me.
My ship afar from the city by field and acre rides
In the haven-stead of Reithron, neath the woody Neion's sides.
And surely each of each we are house-friends from of old.
Go now to the elder, Laertes, and e'en thus shalt thou be told
By the warrior ancient of days, who now no more doth go
To the city, but out in the acres wears through his weary woe,
And he with an hoary handmaid, who whiles before him lays
The meat and the drink for his solace, when toil on his body weighs,
As to and fro he creepeth where his fat land wine doth bear.
Now hither I came; for they told me that thy father now was here
Amid his folk; but it seemeth that the Gods his coming let.
Yet hath not Odysseus the godlike from the earth departed yet;
Alive he is and hoarded, meseems, amidst of the deep,
In an isle by the sea begirdled; hard men his body keep,
Fierce men, and him unwilling belike they hoard apart.
But somewhat will I foretell thee as the thing falls into my heart
How the end is doomed by the Deathless, and whitherward all shall go.
Though nought of a seer I be, nor the wisdom of fowl do I know.
For long now he shall not be lacking from the land of his fathers of old;
Yea e'en were he shackled with iron it should not his coming withhold;
Somehow return shall he win him; he is wise in many a gin.
But come and tell me of one thing, and clear be thy telling herein:
Thou fair, well waxen lad, art thou Odysseus' seed?
For full like is thy head unto his and thine eyes are his indeed.
And often we twain together in speech and deed were blent,
Before unto Troy he fared in the days when the others went,
The blossom of the Argives, in the hollow ships of the sea.
But thenceforward nought have I seen him, nor yet hath he looked upon [me.'

But Telemachus the heedful to speaking thus befell:
"O guest, exceeding clearly the story will I tell;
My mother saith I am his; but myself I know it not,
For no man of his father, meseemeth, can indeed and throughly wot.
But for me, O would that I were the child of some happy one,
Whom amidst his home and his havings old age should over-run:
Yet now since hereof thou askest, they say that I had my birth
From that most hapless man of all men that dwell on the earth."

Thereto the Grey-eyed, the Goddess, Athene, answered again:
"No nameless line hereafter did the Gods for thee ordain,
When Penelope thy mother thus bore thee as thou art.
But what is this cheer and assembly, what therein is thy part?
Is it a gild or a wedding? No meeted meal can it be;
For men that with pride are swollen, men masterful here I see
Throughout the homestead revelling; hereto if a wise man came
Wroth would he be amongst them beholding many a shame."

But Telemachus the heedful thereto the answer gave:
"O guest, since hereof thou askest, and full answer thou wouldst have,
Time was when this house that thou seest was on a goodly road
Towards riches and great honour, while that man with his folk abode.
Now the Gods have otherwise willed it, and evil things they plan,
For more unseen have they made him than any son of man.
Yea I had known of him dead with no such grief and pain,
If he mid his battle-fellows mid the folk of Troy had been slain,
Or lay dead in the hands of his folk when the spindle of war he had wound,
For then would the host together, the Achæans, have heaped his mound,
And great renown had he gotten for his son in the coming day;
But now the Wights of the Whirlwind have snatched him fameless away.
He is gone unseen and unheard of, and hath left me lamenting and moan.

Nor withal amidst my sorrow must I wail for him alone.
For look you, in these our islands, as many as lord it o'er
Dulichium or Samé, or Zacynthus' woody shore,
Or in Ithaca the rocky the rule o'er the people bear,
All these are wooing my mother and our house they waste and wear.
And she the loathly wedding doth not utterly gainsay
Nor bring it to any ending, while my house they are eating away;
And me at last will they come to and rend me utterly."

Then answered Pallas Athene, her anger swelling high:
"Out on it! Sorely thou needest Odysseus wandering afar
To lay hand on these wasting Wooers as shameless as they are.
Lo now might he come to the house and there by the foredoor stand,
And he with helm and with shield and with two great spears in his hand;
He even such as I saw him when he came to our house and our hall,
And there he sat at the drink, and was blithe and merry withal.
From Ephyra then was he faring, from Ilus that Mermerus' son,
For there in his fleet-faring ship o'er the sea had Odysseus gone,
And he sought for a deadly venom, and the bane of men would he have
For the smearing of brazen arrows, but this nowise Ilus gave,
Since he feared the Gods of heaven and the folk that never die.
But my father gave it him straight, for he loved him utterly.
Ah might he but deal with these Wooers e'en such as I know of his ways;
Then bitter would be their wedding and speedy the doom of their days.
But whether he come back again, and in his hall built high
Avenge him of all; these things on the knees of the God they lie.
But thee, I bid thee consider, and seek till thou find a rede
Whereby from out of thine homestead these Wooers ye may speed.
Come now and hearken to me, and take heed unto my words;
To-morrow unto the meeting thou shalt call the Achæan lords
And speak out the word before all men with the Gods to witness it,

Bidding the Wooers to scatter and home to their own to flit:
But thy mother, if in her heart for wedlock she doth yearn,
Then home to her father the mighty, to his house let her return.
And men will make her a wedding, and goodly and fair and great
Shall they dight the gifts of the wedding for a well-loved daughter meet.
But a rede will I set in thy heart if thou wilt hearken and heed:
Do thou dight thee a twenty-banked ship right good, and therewith speed
To ask tidings of thy father so long away from his home,
If a man of men may tell thee or from Zeus a word may come,
Who most of all to menfolk bears tidings of renown.
And first of the glorious Nestor ask thou in Pylos town;
Then of tawny Menelaus when to Sparta thou hast come,
For of all brass-clad Achæans was he last to get him home.
Then if of thy father living and returning thou dost hear,
Thou may'st then outwear this wasting for yet another year;
But if thou hear of him dead and no longer living on earth,
Then getting thee back to thy folk-land, the dear land of thy father's birth,
There heap up the howe, and be giving great gifts of the burial bed,
As great and as good as befitteth: but some man thy mother shall wed.
And when thou hast done all this and these things to the end hast wrought,
Then in thy heart and thy soul thou shalt hold and cherish the thought
What wise in thy very homestead these Wooers ye may slay,
Whether by guile it be done or straight out in the face of the day:
For thou of years so waxen childs' play befitteth no more.
Or hast thou not heard of the fame which the great Orestes bore
Amid all the folk of mankind, when he slew his father's bane
Ægisthus the guileful of rede who his glorious sire had slain?
And thou, dear heart, for both great and fair do I look on thee,
Be valiant and gather fair fame of the men who are going to be.
But now to my ship swift-faring must I get me aback at this tide
And unto my fellow-farers, who downcast my coming abide,

But thou, be heedful of all and ponder the words I have said."

But Telemachus the heedful to her the answer sped:
"O guest, with words full friendly hast thou spoken with all goodwill
As a father speaks to a son, and I shall remember it still.
But come now, abide yet a little, although thou be pressed to depart,
Until well washen and merry, with all content in thy heart
Thou may'st wend to thy ship in joyance bearing a gift with thee,
Dear-bought, exceeding beauteous, an heirloom given by me,
Such as dear guests beloved will give for guests to take."

But therewithal the Goddess, grey-eyed Athene spake.
"Nay hoard me no longer as now, for I long for the road and the way,
And the gift that thy dear heart biddeth thou shalt give on another day;
When I come again thou shalt give it, and home shall I bear it indeed,
And thou bearing out things goodly shalt have goodly things for thy meed."

So spake the Grey-eyed Athene, and departed e'en as a fowl,
In an eagle-shape she flew; but in the young man's soul
Stoutness and might had she planted, and ever more and more
He bethought him of his father; so he turned these matters o'er
And his soul was fulfilled of wonder, for he deemed it a God to be.
So he got him back to the Wooers, and e'en as a God was he.

Now to these was the minstrel singing, and silent there they sat,
And hearkened the sad returning the Achæan war-host gat
From Troy-town, all the story of Pallas' heavy doom.
But the child of Icarius heard it from above in the upper room;
Wise-heart Penelope hearkened and caught up the holy song:
Down then from the stair high-builded of her house she cometh along,
But not alone, for behind her there follow maidens twain.

But when that Glory of Women the Wooers' band doth gain,
She standeth beside the door-post of that strong-builded stead,
Before her cheeks yet holding the gleaming gear of her head,
On each hand a heedful maiden beside her in the hall.
So to the glorious singer she speaketh, and weepeth withal:

"O Phemius, since for man's solace thou knowest full many a thing,
The deeds of men and of Godfolk, such fame as minstrels sing,
Sit, while they drink and are silent, and sing to them somewhat of these.
But from this woful rhyme, this lamenting, I bid thee to cease,
For the heart that is dear in my breast doth it ever waste and wear,
Since I, and I above all a ceaseless sorrow bear,
For so dear a head sore longing, remembering still the man
Whose fame was abroad in Hellas, and through mid Argos ran."

But Telemachus the heedful to her thus answered and spake: [make
"O mother, and why dost thou grudge it that the faithful minstrel should
Such glee as his heart would have him? Nor lay we on singers sweet
This blame, but on Zeus let us lay it, he that to each doth mete,
Yea to each of men gainseeking such measure as he will.
Blame not the man though he singeth of the Danaans' doom of ill;
For ever to men that hearken will minstrels make no doubt
To tell of the newest tidings, if such be floating about.
But the tale of such-like things thy soul must hear and abide,
For it was not only Odysseus that lost his returning-tide,
But by Troy-town moreover fell many another man.
But come now, go to thy bower, and deal with such things as ye can:
With the rock and the loom be busy, and thine handmaids order and teach,
That they speed the work and the weaving: but for men is the word and
the speech;
For all, but for me the chiefest, for here am I the might and the power.'

She wondered and back again she wended unto her bower,
And deep in her heart was she holding the heedful word he had said.
To her bower aloft was she gone with wife and with serving-maid ;
There she wept for her man beloved, for Odysseus, till at last
Sweet slumber and sleep on her eyelids Grey-eyed Athene cast.
But again rose the din of the Wooers through the shadowy halls and wide,
And each and all were they longing to lie in the bed by her side.

Then Telemachus the heedful took up the word again :
" O Wooers of my mother, O measureless masterful men !
Now speed we the feast in joyance, nor din of riot raise,
For lovely it is to be hearkening to such a minstrel's lays,
Whose speech is the voice of a God, so fair it is and fit.
But wend we all in the dawning and in assembly sit,
That there I may speak before you, and a downright word ye may hear :
To wit, from this house be ye wending, and seek your meat elsewhere,
Yourselves your own wealth eating from house to house in turn !
But if it like you better, and if for the sweetness ye yearn
Of wasting another's life-store, and no atonement to pay,
Rejoice therein ! But for me to the Deathless Gods will I pray,
If for deed the deed's requital perchance from Zeus may come,
And unavenged shall ye perish one day in this house and home."

So spake, and all the Wooers they bit their lips in wrath,
And at Telemachus marvelled, so boldly spake he forth.
But him Antinoüs answered, Eupeithes' son was he :
" Telemachus, the Godfolk are surely teaching thee
To speak out high and haughty, and put forth the daring word ?
So may the son of Cronos ne'er make thee king and lord
O'er Ithaca the seagirt the heirloom that ye take."

But Telemachus the heedful these words in answer spake:
"Antinoüs, art thou angry with the shapen word of my voice?
This thing, if of Zeus it were given, I should take it and rejoice;
Or of all that befalleth manfolk dost thou deem it the evillest thing?
For look you, I deem it no evil to become a lord and a king,
For in wealth his house is waxen and most glorious doth he grow.
But many a King of Achæans meseems there is e'en now
In Ithaca the seagirt, both young and old; and one
Amidst these may chance on the lordship since Odysseus' days are done.
But o'er this my house and my war-thralls will I verily be the king,
E'en they that Odysseus gat me in his gainful warfaring."

Then Eurymachus, Polybus' child, thus answering, spake on high:
"Telemachus, as for this thing on the knees of the Gods doth it lie,
Which man shall be King of Achæans in Ithaca girt by the sea; [be:
And surely thine own shalt thou have, and King in thine house shalt thou
And ne'er may the man come hither to force thee against thy will,
And wrest thy wealth from thine hand while men live in Ithaca still.
But now, O friend, would I ask thee of the guest that dealt with thee,
Whence was the man among menfolk? Of what land did he boast him to be?
What was the earth that begat him and the fields of his father's land?
Came he with tidings and message that thy father is nigh unto hand?
Or seeking some need of his own thus wise has he hitherward hied?
But he leapt up and straightway was gone, nor here to be known would abide,
And yet by his mien and his visage was he nowise one of the base."

But Telemachus the heedful thus answered to the case:
"Eurymachus, gone is the day of my father's coming home,
Nor yet would I trust a message if from anywhere any should come.
Nor would I heed foretelling if perchance my mother should bring
Some wizard unto the homestead to ask him of the thing.

But as for my guest, e'en Mentes he gave himself out for to be,
The wise Anchialus' son, from Taphos of the sea;
And he lordeth it over the Taphians the lovers of the oar."

So spake he; but certain knowledge of the Deathless Goddess he bore.
But they, they gat to the dance, and the lovesome song's delight,
And there they abode in joyance the coming on of night;
And as they rejoiced and were merry, was the dark night on them come,
And they went each one to his place to slumber and sleep at home.

But Telemachus went to his chamber high-built in a far-looking stead,
Of the house exceeding beauteous, and there he came to his bed,
While many things in his mind was he heedfully turning o'er.
But the burning brand for his lighting a trusty woman bore,
Euryclea, daughter of Ops, that was Pisenor's seed;
But her with his wealth and his treasure had Laertes bought indeed
In the very bloom of her youth, and twenty beeves was her price;
And he honoured her in the house as his wife the prudent and wise.
But abed he lay not with her, for the wrath of his wife did he fear.
So she bore the brands a-flaming, and of all the handmaids there
She loved him the most, and had nursed him while yet but a babe was he.

So he opened the door of the chamber wrought well and heedfully,
And sat him down on the bed, and put off his dainty weed
And gave it unto the goodwife, to the hands of the heedful of rede:
And she folded up the garment and smoothed it out with care,
And hung it up on a pin by the jointed bedstead fair.
Then forth from the chamber she wended, and the door thereof pulled to
By the handle-ring of silver, and the bolt with a thong she drew.

There night long well enfolded in the flower of the fleece he lay
And pondered the word of Athene and the Goddess-bidden way.

BOOK II.

ARGUMENT.

THE MEETING OF FOLK IN ITHACA: THE MASTERFUL AND PROUD WORDS OF THE WOOERS. ZEUS SENDS A TOKEN. TELEMACHUS TAKES SHIP FOR PYLOS.

NOW when the Mother of Daydawn, the Ruddy-fingered, shone,
From the bed he gat him straightway, Odysseus' well-loved son.
He clad him, and over his shoulders the sword he cast around,
And under his sleek-skinned feet the sandals fair he bound.
And forth he went from the chamber and e'en as a God was he made.

But therewithal the henchmen, the shrilly-voiced, he bade
The long haired lords Achæan to the meeting-place to cry;
And the cry went forth, and the people came thronging speedily.
But when they were gathered and thronging, to the Meeting did he fare,
And as he went, in his right hand he held a brazen spear.
Nor went he alone, for behind him two swift hounds followed his feet,
And great measure of grace and glory did Athene to him mete.

So there as he sat amongst them all folk beheld his face,
And he sat in his father's high-seat, for the elders gave him place.

But first the lord Ægyptius the speech to the folk upheld;
Of ten thousand things was he learned, and sore was he bowed with eld.
But his son the well-beloved, with Odysseus gone had he

Unto Ilios nurse of horses in the hollow ships of the sea:
He was Antiphus the warfain: the wild Cyclops slew him outright,
In the hollow place of the mountain, for his latest supper dight.
There were three more sons of the elder; one went in the Wooers' band,
Eurynomus men called him; but two laboured their father's land.
Yet the lost he forgat in nowise, but mourned and lamented him sore;
And for him e'en now was he weeping as these words to the folk he upbore:

"O men of Ithaca, hearken to the words that I shall say:
Our Meeting hath not been holden, nor our sitting since the day
When forth in the hollow ships did the great Odysseus speed. [need,
And who now hath summoned us thuswise? on whom hath fallen such
Whether he be of the younglings or of those who are elder of days?
Hath he perchance heard tidings of the war-host wending its ways,
Whereof he may speak to us clearly, since first to his ears it came?
Or what else to all folk common hath he got to tell out and proclaim?
But good unto me he seemeth; fair fall his luck from henceforth!
May Zeus to a good end bring it, the thing that he deemeth of worth!"

So he spake: the loved son of Odysseus of his words' betokening was fain.
And he sat but a little longer, for he yearned the speech to gain.
So he stood amidst of the Meeting, and took the staff in his hand;
Henchman Pisenor gave it, for due things did he understand.
So he to the elder turned him and these words withal he said:

"Old man, he is nowise afar that this gathering of people hath made,
And soon shalt thou know him thyself; for to me is the great grief come,
Though neither have I heard tidings of the war-host wending home,
Nor yet may I speak it out clearly, as the first that hath heard of its fame:
Nor aught else to all folk common have I got to tell out and proclaim;
But on me myself is the need; in my house is the evil thing,

Twofold: I have lost my father, a great man, whiles the king
Of us here gathered together; and fatherly mild was his sway.
But behind lies a harm far greater, which will hurry us all to decay,
And break up house and home, and waste all the store of my life.
For Wooers are hard on my mother, and she loth, to be lady and wife.
And these are the sons beloved of the noblest men that are here.
To the house of her father Icarius they durst not draw anear,
That he may give his daughter and the wedding gift receive,
And may give her to whom he willeth and the man to him most lieve;
But now are they hanging about my homestead day by day,
And there my sheep and my oxen and my fatted goats they slay,
And feast in wanton riot as they drink the gleaming wine.
And huge is the wrack and the wasting; for in that house of mine
Is none such as was Odysseus the house from wrack to defend:
And at least nought such am I: yea, belike to the very end
I shall be but a pitiful warrior, and no crafty man in fight.
Yet indeed from this I would ward me, if I had but craft and might:
For we bear, but may bear it no longer, for now without glory or fame
My house and my home is falling; but ye, on yourselves take blame,
And have shamefast heed of others, the men that neighbours be,
That dwell about and around us; and the wrath of the Gods fear ye,
Lest at last they turn upon you in wrath at your evil deeds.
But I pray you by Zeus of Olympus, and by Themis' head who heeds
The meetings of all men-folk to gather or let go,
Refrain your hands, and leave me to waste alone in my woe.
Unless it be that my father Odysseus the glorious one, [done:
Hath grudged 'gainst the well-greaved Achæans, and some evil to them
Then grudge against me, and avenge you, and wreak me evil amain,
And be egging on these Wasters! But more would be my gain
If all ye yourselves would be wasting my treasure and my fee.
For if ye to its eating betake you, then speedy atonement should be,

For we through the town would be wending and hugging the word of our
And still for our goods beseeching, till all should be given aback. [lack,
But now a bootless grievance on my heart and my soul ye thrust."

So spake he full of anger, and threw down the staff in the dust,
And broke out into weeping, and the whole folk pitied him there,
And all others sat in silence, neither did any dare
To speak hard words to the youngling, nor any answer they made ;
None save Antinoüs only, who thuswise answered and said :

"High spoken, unbridled of mood ! Telemachus, what dost thou say
To bring us to shame among men, and the scorn on our heads to lay !
But for these Achæan Wooers, herein thou shalt blame them not ;
But rather thy mother beloved who of many a wile doth wot :
Three years have worn away, and the fourth is now on the road,
While the hearts of all the Achæans with trouble she doth load.
Fair hope unto all she giveth, and promiseth every one,
And many a message she sendeth, while her heart doth otherwise run ;
And another wile she pondered, that her heart was bringing to birth.
Within the house of her homestead hath she dight her a warp of worth,
Fine and far-reaching of measure, and thus unto us hath she said :
' O younglings, O wooers of mine, since the goodly Odysseus is dead,
Withhold you from urging my wedding till this web to an end I have brought,
Lest the yarn have been spun in vain and perish and come to nought.
'Tis a shroud for the lord Laertes against his doom-day strong
And the tide when Death shall seize him, that layeth men along :
Lest from the Achæan women this blame upon me hap,
There lieth a man that was wealthy, and he lacketh a linen lap.'

"So she spake and we gave consent, and our noble hearts did she sway,
And that web of worth thenceforward she was weaving ever by day,

And ever by night would undo it when the torches were set beside.
Three years she beguiled the Achæans, and the thing by craft did hide;
But when come was the fourth of the years, and season on season rolled,
Then one of her women who knew it the story to us told,
And we found her there undoing that worthy web of cloth,
And so to an end must she bring it perforce and exceeding loth.

"But for thee, lo we the Wooers this answer to thee show,
That thou in thy soul may'st know it, and that all the folk may know.
Send thou thy mother away, and bid her a wedding to gain
With whomso her father willeth, of whomso her heart may be fain.
But if the Achæan children she troubleth so long a space,
Still turning about in her mind the great gifts of Athene's grace,
—All the cunning of works most beauteous and crafty redes and fair,
And gainful wiles so goodly that the like no man may hear,
Nay not e'en of the fairhaired women of the old days of renown,
As Tyro and Alcmene, and Mycene of the crown:
Not one of these in her wisdom as Penelope was wise.—
Yet this rede of hers hath she compassed in no such happy guise,
For the Wooers shall eat thy life-store and waste thy treasury,
While yet this mind she holdeth which the Gods who live on high
Have set in her breast: for herself she wins glory great and good,
But for thee but sorrowful longing for thy wasted livelihood;
For neither to labour our lands nor elsewhere will we depart
Till she weds that man of Achæans who is lief and dear to her heart."

Then Telemachus the heedful thus answered and gan say;
"Antinoüs, nought is it in me to thrust from my house away
The woman that bore me and reared me, while aloof in other lands
My father is living or dead: ill too to pay from my hands
Great wealth to Icarius her father, for that willing I send her home:

All ill from him shall I suffer; from the Gods too evil shall come
When my mother cries on the Hateful, the Wreakers, as forth from the hall
She fareth; and blame moreover on me from men should fall.
No, never this word that ye bid me shall mouth of mine proclaim.
But if the soul within you of these things thinketh shame,
Then forth from my house be wending your meat elsewhere to earn,
Yourselves your own wealth eating from house to house in turn.
But if sweeter to you it seemeth, and by far the better way,
To eat up the life of another and no atonement pay,
Rejoice therein! But for me, on the Deathless Gods will I call
If for deed the deed's requital perchance from Zeus may fall,
And all unavenged hereafter in my house and home shall ye die."

So he spake; but Zeus the Farseer sent him two ernes to fly
Adown from the tops of the mountains that Meeting-stead to find.
And they twain for awhile came flying along the breath of the wind
With their wings outstretched together, as side by side they flew.
But when to the midmost Assembly, the many-voiced, they drew,
They whirled about thereover, and flapped their mighty wings,
And looked o'er the heads of all men betokening deadly things;
For each other, cheek and neck, they rent with their talons, and then
Rightward they shot through the houses, and the city of those men.

So at the fowl men marvelled, for they saw the sight as it was;
And they pondered it all in their minds what things were coming to pass.
But then spake Halitherses, the old lord, Mastor's son:
For of all that generation he outwent every one
In the lore of fowl, and of telling how things foredoomed shall fall.
So now of his goodwill he spake, and he said before them all:

"Hearken, O Ithacan men, to the word I am going to say!

And chiefly I speak to the Wooers and a word before them lay:
For their bane is rolling upon them. For not much longer now
Shall Odysseus be far from his friends; he draws near, and he fashions to
The slaughter and the death-doom of all who are gathered here; [grow
And to many another who dwelleth in Ithaca shining out clear
Is death and the evil fashioned. But before we get our bane
Let us look to it how we may stay them; or themselves let them refrain.
For so shall it all be better, as men shall speedily see;
Nor untried am I in foretelling, but well knowing the thing that shall be.
For I say that unto that man all verily came to pass
In that very wise I foretold it, when to Troy the faring was;
When the Argives went, and with them Odysseus of many a rede:
To wit, that with evil laden and his folk all dead indeed,
At last unknown of all men within the twentieth year
He should come to his home and his people: and now the end draws
[near."
But Eurymachus, Polybus' son, thus answering, spake on high:
"Old man, get thee back to thine house, to thine own babes prophesy,
Lest they suffer evil hereafter. Forsooth I tell thee now,
That I of these things am foretelling in a better wise than thou.
For many a manner of fowl goeth to and fro forsooth
Beneath the beams of the sun, nor do all tell fateful truth.
Far off is Odysseus and dead; and I would thou hadst perished as well;
Then no words wouldst thou be making of fateful betokening to tell,
Or be egging Telemachus here, who is ever as wroth as may be,
Expecting a gift from thine household if perchance he may give it thee.
But a thing I do thee to wit, and surely shall it be done
If thou, who knowest so much, and such ancient lore, egg on
A youngling unto anger with these wheedling words of thee.
Then first of all unto him more grievous will it be,
And by means of these moreover no prevailing may he get,

And on thee a fine shall we lay, old man, that thy soul shall fret
When thou payest the same unto us; and for thee hard sorrow shall grow.
But unto Telemachus here, amidst all the road will I show:
Let him straightway bid his mother to her father's house to fare
And there will men dight her a wedding, and the wedding gift outbear,
Great gifts, such as well-loved daughters have with them on the way.
Nor deem I ere this be accomplished that we sons of Achæans will stay
Our eager grievous wooing; for never a man do we dread,
Nay, not Telemachus even, though plenteous speech he shed;
Nor heed we the fateful tokens which thou, old man and hoar,
Wilt thus be babbling vainly and thereby be hated more.
But his wealth shall be evilly eaten, and bootless shall be the waste,
While the woman wears out the wedding that we Achæans would haste.
Here too from day unto day will all we abide the end,
And each strive to win her glory, nor with other women will wend,
E'en such as were verily meet for each of us Wooers to wed."

But Telemachus the heedful thereto made answer and said:
"Eurymachus, thou, and ye Wooers high-born who are here in the place,
No more will I speak hereover, nor beseech you more in the case;
Since now the Gods know it all, and all the Achæans know.
But come now, give me a ship, and a score of fellows to row,
E'en such as may speed my ways from here to there of the land;
For to Sparta would I get me, and to Pylos of the sand,
To ask tidings of my father so long away from home,
If a man of men may tell me, or from Zeus a word may come,
Who most of all to men-folk bears tidings of renown.
But if of my father's life-days and returning I am shown
Then may I endure this wasting for yet another year.
But if he is gone from the earth, and of nought but his death I hear,
Then getting me back to my folk-land, the dear earth where the fathers were [bred,

Shall I heap up his howe, and be giving great gifts of the burial bed,
As meet as may be; but my mother will I give to a man among men."

So he spake and sat him adown; but to them rose Mentor then,
The friend of the glorious Odysseus, who had given into his hand
The charge of his house and his homestead when in ships he left the land,
And all to obey the elder as the steadfast warder of all:
Well-willing he spake amidst them, and such words from his mouth let fall:

"Hearken, O Ithacan men, to the word I am going to speak!
Let no sceptred king henceforward be kindly and blithe and meek,
Nor practised in seemly knowledge befitting the mind of kings!
But let him be hard and cruel to do unseemly things!
Since no man of the people remembereth the goodly Odysseus to-day,
The man who was king amongst us, and fatherly mild was his sway.
But for these same wanton Wooers, forsooth I envy them not,
Nor begrudge the masterful doings that with evil mind they plot.
For whereas the house of Odysseus perforce a prey they make
And say 'no more he returneth,' their very heads they stake.
But with all this folk am I angry, that in silence sit ye all
And have no heart on these Wooers with words at least to fall,
And make them cease from troubling: ye are many and they are few."

But Leocritus, son of Evenor, he answered thereunto:
"O baneful, O wit-straying Mentor, what a word hath come from thee!
That thou biddest these men to stay us; and forsooth full hard shall it be
Even for you, the many, from our meat to drive us with war:
Yea, e'en if the Ithacan came, if Odysseus were come once more,
All hot of heart to be doing and forth from his house to drive
The noble Wooers, that feasting about his homestead live,
Yet scarce should his wife be rejoicing, though she long for his coming sore:

For foul doom would he draw upon him if he battle the few with the more.
So against due doom hast thou spoken, and thy word is nowise good.
But now let the people sunder, each one to his livelihood;
But let Mentor or Halitherses for the youngling speed the way,
For they were his father's fellows of old time in the earlier day.
And yet meseemeth indeed that in Ithaca long will he sit,
And as for this his wayfare, he will never accomplish it."

So went his voice abroad, and the Meeting was broken withal,
And the folk therefrom they sundered, and each went to his house and his hall.
And into the house of Odysseus went the Wooers presently.

But Telemachus, getting him gone apart by the side of the sea,
His hands in the grey wave washed, and besought Athene and said:
"Hearken to me, thou Holy, who yesterday came to our stead
Bidding me fare in a ship o'er the shadow-haunted main,
Of my far-off father's return some tidings to gather and gain,
Lo, this thy rede and thy bidding the Achæans hinder and let,
Yea, these the masterful Wooers on evil counsel set."

E'en so he spake beseeching; and Athene drew anear
In the shape of Mentor's body; and her voice was his to hear
As the Goddess spake to himward, and set these words on the wing:

"Telemachus, now shalt thou be no foolish faintheart thing.
If of thy father's good-heart in thee hath sprung the seed,
Such a man for the word well-spoken, and fulfilment of the deed,
Not in vain shall be thy faring, nor thy going forth be undone.
But if of Penelope fair and of him thou be no son,
Then nought is my hope hereover that thou bring about thy desire.
Though not oft is the son meseemeth e'en such an one as his sire.

Worser they be for the more part, and a few may be better forsooth.
But since thou shalt be henceforward no foolish, faintheart youth,
And the wise redes of Odysseus have not utterly gone from thee,
So there is hope for thee yet that thou make this matter to be.
Heed not these Wooers the witless, nor their purpose nor their rede,
Since nought have they wit and wisdom, nor of righteousness have heed;
And of death are they wotting nothing, and their black doom drawing
That all these men together on one day shall they die. [anigh,
But this journey for which thou longest, it shall nowise letted be;
For I, thy father's fellow, will be such an one for thee
As will dight thee a ship full speedy, and myself with thee will fare.
But get thee aback to the homestead and consort with the Wooers there,
And furnish forth thy victual; set all things in their vessels then;
The wine in pitchers befitting, and meal the marrow of men
In skins that are nothing leaky. But I through the folk will go
And gather thee fellows well-willing. But for ships there are many enow,
Both new, and old and wayworn, in Ithaca girt by the flood,
And I will see unto it if one may be better than good,
And in haste then will we dight her and sail the sea-plain wide."

So spake the daughter of Zeus; nor long did Telemachus bide
When the voice and the words of counsel of the Goddess he had heard,
But he went his ways to the homestead and heavy of heart he fared.
There then in the palace he found them, the masterful Wooers a-playing,
And there were they singeing the swine, and the goats in the fore-court
But unto Telemachus laughing came Antinoüs the lord, [flaying.
And took him straight by the hand, and named him and spake out the [word:

"Telemachus, high-flown of speech, unbridled of wrath, from thy heart
Let all thought of the deed of evil and the wicked word depart,
And be eating and drinking amongst us as it was thy wont to do,

But all these matters of thine the Achæans will look thereto,
E'en the ship and the chosen rowers, that the swiftlier thou may'st fare
To the glorious goodly Pylos, some tale of thy father to hear."

But Telemachus the heedful thus spake and answered again :
" Antinoüs, not any longer with this band of masterful men
May I eat my meat in silence and be merry and at peace.
Is it not enough, O Wooers, that ye would shear me and fleece
Of my havings great and goodly, and a speechless babe was I then?
But now am I grown unto manhood, and I hear the speech of men,
And I know the tale ; and within me my mood is waxen indeed,
And I will try it upon you the evil doom to speed,
Whether I fare into Pylos, or here mid the folk may be ;
For not in vain meseemeth shall I wend that road o'er the sea.
As a merchant I go ; for no master am I of rowers or keel,
For even so would ye have it as more gainful to your weal."

He spake : from Antinoüs' hand his hand he snatched forthright :
And there as about the homestead the feast the Wooers dight
They cast the jeers upon him, and spake with mocking words,
And thus would a man be saying of those young and proud-heart lords :
" Lo now Telemachus surely is compassing our bane,
If he from sandy Pylos some help of men may gain,
Or it may be out of Sparta, so sore he longs for the thing ;
Or belike unto Ephyra would he, that he therefrom may bring
Some drug that man's bane winneth from the fatness of the land,
And into our cup would he cast it, that all we may die at his hand."

Then another of those proud younglings would speak and say e'en so :
" But who knoweth if he betake him on the hollow ship to go
But he shall die as Odysseus far off from any friend?

And therewith a toil and a trouble on us the man shall send,
The dealing out of his treasure, and the giving of his stead
To his mother, that she may have it, and the man who the woman shall wed."

So they spake; but down he wended to his father's treasury,
High-ceiled and vast, where in heaps did the gold and the copper lie,
And the raiment in the coffers, and well-smelling oil good store.
And there within stood the casks; sweet drinking, pressed from of yore,
Unblended, glorious, and good was the drink within the same;
Orderly ranged by the wall they stood till Odysseus came,
Full many a woe outwearing returning home to his house.
Thereto were the folding-doors, two-leaved and fitting close,
And there by day and by night-tide a housewife abode apart,
All things therein well warding in the wisdom of her heart;
Euryclea daughter of Ops, Pisenor's son, was she.

Her then Telemachus hailed and called to the treasury:
"Dame, draw me off into pitchers the wine that is sweet in the cup,
The sweetest of all that thou hast after that which thou hoardest up
Mindful of him the hapless, if yet from anywhere
Odysseus, seed of Zeus, from the death and the doom may fare.
Thereof now fill me twelve, and to each its due lid deal,
And into the well-sewn wallets pour me the barley meal;
And twenty measures in all of well-ground meal let there be.
And do thou alone know this; and gather these things for me,
And I at the nightfall will fetch them, what time my mother is sped
Aloft to the woman's bower, and her mind is turning to bed:
For unto Sparta as now, and to sandy Pylos I fare,
If perchance of my father beloved returning home I may hear."

Then his loved nurse Euryclea straightway into wailing brake,

And therewithal sore weeping these winged words she spake :
" Wherefore, O child beloved, hath this thought in thy soul had birth ?
And whither wilt thou be faring o'er so great a deal of the earth ?
Thou lonely, thou well-beloved ! And Odysseus, the God-begot,
Afar from his land hath perished mid a folk that knoweth him not.
And when thou art gone, these Wooers will devise thee evil to come,
What wise with guile they may slay thee and deal out the goods of thine
Bide here ! by thine own be sitting ! what needest thou to go [home.
And over the untilled sea-plain to wander bearing thy woe ?"

But Telemachus the heedful the answering word did speed ;
" Heart up, O mother ! for surely nought godless is my rede,
But make oath no word hereover to say to my mother dear
Until the eleventh day, or the twelfth at least, be here ;
Or till she herself shall miss me, and shall learn that I wander afar,
Lest she with grief and weeping her lovely body mar."

Then a great oath swore the old wife by the Gods to speak to none :
And so when she had sworn it and all the oath had done,
Then straightway into the pitchers for him the wine she drew,
And into the well-sewn wallets the barley-meal did do.
But Telemachus hied to the homestead and again with the Wooers was [blent.

But the Goddess, the Grey-eyed Athene, on other errand went,
For in Telemachus' likeness she sped the city through
And stood by each of the shipmen, and spake a word thereto,
That unto the ship at nightfall they should gather every one ;
Moreover of Noemon, who was Phronius' famous son,
She craved a ship ; and blithely gave he promise of the same.

And now the sun sank under, and on all ways darkness came.

Then she let shove the swift ship seaward, and therein stow all the gear,
E'en such as is well-befitting for well-benched ships to bear,
By the haven's head she moored her, and there were gathered the crew,
The goodly lads, and the Goddess cheered each to dare and do.

But the Goddess, the Grey-eyed Athene, of other things had heed,
And unto the house of Odysseus the goodly did she speed:
There heavy sweet o'er the Wooers the slumber and sleep she shed,
From their hands fell the cups of the Wooers and their souls astray she led.
Till they roused them to sleep through the town; no longer they delayed
To sit, now the slumber was on them and the sleep on their eyelids weighed.

But now the Grey-eyed Athene to Telemachus spake again,
Having called him forth from the halls and the fair habitation of men,
In the shape of Mentor's body, and her voice as his voice to hear:
"Telemachus, now already are thy well-greaved fellows there,
By the oars they sit abiding till thou speed them forth on the way:
Come now, the road and the journey no longer let us delay."

So spake Pallas Athene, and swiftly forth she led,
And hard on the feet of the Goddess his footsteps forth he sped;
But when they were come to the ship and down to the side of the sea,
They found upon the foreshore the long-haired company.
Then the holy might of the youngling, Telemachus, spake and said:
"Hither now with the meal, fair fellows, for together all is laid,
And in the hall abideth; nor thereof hath my mother heard,
Nor hath any maid of the handmaids, save one, known any word."

He spake and led them thither, and they followed hard at heel,
And they brought forth all and laid it within the well-benched keel,
E'en so as they had been bidden by Odysseus' well-loved son.

Then Telemachus went a ship-board, but Athene led him on,
And she sat, and Telemachus by her, in the hinder part of the ship,
And therewithal the shipmen, they let the hawsers slip,
And they also went a shipboard, and sat on the benches there;
But Grey-eyed Athene sped them a happy wind and fair,
The north-west piping keenly across the wine-dark sea.
But Telemachus bade his fellows, and egged them busily,
To gear their tackling duly, and they hearkened and so did;
For into the mid-thwart's hollow the pine-tree mast they slid
When up aloft they had raised it; then with forestays it they stayed,
And hauled the white sails upward with ox-hide ropes well laid.
With the wind the mid-sail bellied and the purple wave began
To roar out aloud round the keel, as forth the good ship ran.
So her road and her way fair speeding, through the waters did she slip.

But they made fast all the tackling throughout the swift black ship,
And they set the bowls of wine all garlanded about,
And poured thereof to the Godfolk whose lives shall never die out,
And in chief to the daughter of Zeus, the Goddess, the Grey-eyed May.

So all through the night and the dawning the good ship cleft her way.

BOOK III.

ARGUMENT.

TELEMACHUS SAILS TO PYLOS, AND THERE SEES NESTOR, WHO TELLS HIM OF AGAMEMNON AND MENELAUS, AND SENDS HIM ON TO SPARTA IN THE COMPANY OF PISISTRATUS HIS SON.

NOW uprose the Sun, and leaving the exceeding lovely mere
Fared up to the brazen heaven, to the Deathless shining clear,
And unto deathful men on the corn-kind earth that dwell.
But they came to the Burg of Neleus, e'en Pylos builded well,
And there on the shore of the sea-flood deeds holy did men do;
To the dark-blue haired Earth-shaker bulls spotless black they slew.
Nine seats of men there were, and five hundred sat in each band,
And for every band of the men nine bulls were held in hand;
And now were they tasting the inwards, and to God were burning the thigh,
When those fellows ran on the beach and brailed the sails on high,
And moored the shapely ship and went thenceforth ashore.
So aland was Telemachus wending, and Athene went before;
And thus as they went, to him-ward the speech of the Grey-eyed came:

"Telemachus, thee it behoveth no longer, the shrinking and shame,
Since for this hast thou sailed the sea-flood, that tidings thou might'st get
Of thy father, what earth may hide him, or what is the doom he hath met
So go thou straight unto Nestor, the tamer of the steed,
That we learn what his bosom hoardeth of good and helpful rede.
But do thou thyself beseech him that he speak straight words to thee;

For no lying speech will he make us, so exceeding wise is he."

But Telemachus the heedful in answer spake the word :
" What wise shall I go, O Mentor? what wise shall I greet the lord?
For as yet in all words of wisdom am I untried and weak ;
And well may a youngling be shamefaced, if speech of an elder he seek.'

But the Goddess, the Grey-eyed Athene, to him thus answered and spake :
" Telemachus, some words surely the thought in thine heart shall make,
And some the Gods shall give thee : for this of thee I wot,
That against the will of the Godfolk thy birth and thy life were not."

So spake Pallas Athene, and swift the way she led,
And after the feet of the Goddess his footsteps forth he sped.
And they went to the Pylian Meeting and unto the Pylian seats,
Where Nestor sat with his sons, and around were they dighting the meats,
And some deal of the flesh were they roasting, and some were they spitting through;
But when they beheld the strangers, about them thronging they drew,
And took their hands in greeting, and bade them sit thereby.
But Pisistratus, son of Nestor, it was he that first drew nigh,
And seated the twain at the feast when of each he had taken the hand,
And on soft-wooled fleeces he set them adown on the sea-washed sand,
By his brother Thrasymedes, and by his father old ;
And he gave them share of the inwards, and filled the cup of gold
With wine ; and with outstretched right hand he hailed Athene the Maid,
The daughter of Zeus the Shielded, and therewithal he said :

" Pour out, O guest, O stranger, to Poseidon lord and king,
For his feast it is ye have happed on, thus hither wandering ;
But when thou hast poured and hast prayed, as the wont is right and meet,
Then give the cup to this other, that the good wine honey-sweet

He too may pour; for meseemeth he too with the Deathless doth deal :
For all sons of men to the Godfolk have need to crave for weal.
But whereas he is the younger, and his age is like unto mine,
Unto thee the first do I give it, the golden cup of wine."

The wine that was sweet in the cup he set in her hand as he spake,
And Athene rejoiced in the man for his wisdom and justice' sake,
Because unto her the first the golden cup he gave.
Then she prayed a great prayer to Poseidon, the king and lord of the wave:
"O Poseidon, O Earth-shaker, hearken! nor grudge unto us that pray,
Nor yet to the deeds that we crave thee fulfilling-tide gainsay!
To Nestor first and his sons give thou glory to befall;
And give good and kindly guerdon to these Pylians one and all,
For their gifts an hundred-folded all glorious with goodwill.
But to me and Telemachus give it our journey's end to fulfil,
And the thing that we sailed for hither in a black ship over the sea."
[should be,
So she spake and she prayed; and fulfilled it, the thing that she prayed
But unto Telemachus straightway she gave the twofold cup,
And the loved son of Odysseus like her the prayer sent up.

But when they had roasted the out-flesh and drawn off from the spits the
Then round about they dealt it for a goodly feast and great, [meat,
And when yearning for meat and for drink they had utterly done away,
Then the Rider, Gerenian Nestor, to the guest-folk fell to say:
"Now is the time more fitting that we ask of guests to tell
What and of whence they may be, since now they have eaten well.
What are ye, guests? whence coming o'er the wet ways do ye go?
Are ye about a business, or fare ye to and fro
As the strong thieves of the waters, that waste and wander, and stake
Their very lives on the hazard, as the aliens' bale they make?"

But Telemachus the heedful thus answered for his part:
And bold he spake, for Athene set boldness in his heart,
That he might crave him tidings of his father wandering wide,
And withal that his fame and his glory mid the sons of men might abide:

"O Nestor, O son of Neleus, great grace of Achæan men, [again:
Thou askest of whence we are wending, and straight out will I tell thee
From the Ithacan land, that lieth under Neion, do we fare,
And our own and no all-folk's matter is that which I declare:
For some wide-spread tale of my father I would gather and bear away,
Of the hapless, glorious Odysseus. Time was, as all men say,
That with him ye were warring and wasting the Troy-folk's city great:
Now of them that fought with the Troy-folk, of all others we know the fate,
And where and how they perished, each man by woful weird;
But for him, the Son of Cronos hath hid his doom unheard,
Nor can any tell me clearly of the place where my father fell,
Whether it were on the mainland that the foe his life did quell,
Or by Amphitrite's billows in the deep sea drowned he lay.
So now to thy knees I betake me, if thou hast goodwill to say
What wise was his woful death-day, if thou saw'st it with thine eyes,
Or from any other wanderer hast heard the tale arise.
—This man, his mother bore him to most exceeding woe—
But have no respect of my sorrow nor be soft and soothing now,
But tell all out unto me, in what wise the man thou hast seen.
And I pray thee, if ever my father, the good Odysseus, hath been,
As good as his word unto thee of the thing that he promised to do,
Amid the Folk of the Trojans, the land of Achæan woe,
Of these things for me be mindful, and speak out straight and plain."

But the Rider of Gerenia, old Nestor, answered again:
"O friend, since thou bringest to mind the grief that we bore of old

In that Folk, we sons of Achæans, of mood unbridled and bold ;
Whatever of grief in our ships on the darkling sea we won,
When after the spoil we wandered as Achilles led us on,
All the grief that about the great City of Priam the King we bare,
As there we fought and there perished all those that the doughtiest were.
For there fell Ajax the champion, and there Achilles lies,
And there Patroclus lieth as the Gods in council wise :
And there lieth the brave and the blameless, Antilochus my son,
A warrior midst the warriors, most swift of foot to run.
And many things else most grievous to us in that land befel ;
Yea, who of men that are mortal the tale thereof may tell,
Nor if thou wert here abiding for five, for six years more,
Wouldst thou have out the tale of the troubles that the great Achæans bore.
Before the story's ending would'st thou hie thee sorrowing home.

"Nine years we lay hard upon them, and wove them baleful doom
With many a wile, and hardly would Zeus the deed fulfil.
But to equal himself against that man in redes none had the will,
For in every wile and cunning he had the foremost part,
Thy father, the glorious Odysseus, if indeed his son thou art.
And for me, amazement holds me as I look on thee to-day ;
For thy speech is e'en as his speech, nor yet could any man say
That a youngling's speech to an elder's could be so like and nigh.

"Now all the while we abode there, the glorious Odysseus and I,
Never in meeting or council did we speak a diverse rede,
But with one mind together, with wit and wisdom indeed,
Of their matter we counselled the Argives how best to bring it about.
But when the steep city of Priam with war we had wasted out
A-shipboard we went, and the Gods the Achæans sundered apart,
And a woful return for the Argives did Zeus devise in his heart ;

Since not all men amongst us were wise-heart men and true;
Ill doom from a deadly anger a many on them drew,
The wrath of the Grey-eyed Goddess, the awful Father's Maid,
Who betwixt those sons of Atreus the strife and the anger laid.

"For those twain, they called to the Meeting the Achæans every one,
Rashly and with no order at the setting of the sun,
And heavy with wine they wended, the sons of Achæans thereto.
But the twain spake a word of the summons, why the folk together they [drew.
There then spake Menelaus, who bade all men presently
To dight their journey homeward o'er the broad back of the sea.
But nought it pleased Agamemnon, who would hold the people still,
The gifts an hundred-folded, and things holy to fulfil, [heal;
That the dreadful wrath of Athene and the bale they might hinder and
Simple! and nothing wotting that of her he might win no weal;
For not lightly the mind of the Gods, of the Deathless, turneth again.
[twain;
"There they stood, and words that were bitter they bandied about, those
Till up rose the well-greaved Achæans with clamour huge indeed,
And in two ways were they minded and diverse was their rede.
So there night-long we abided, and each side on the other was fain
To speed hard things and bitter, since Zeus was devising our bane.
But down to the salt-sea holy our ships on the morn did we get,
And therein the goods we had gathered and our low-girt women we set.
But half of the folk were withholden, to abiding were they won
With the Shepherd of the People, Agamemnon, Atreus' son:
And half, we went a-shipboard and unmoored, and speedily
Sailed off; for the God was laying all smooth the whale-great sea.

"Thenceforth unto Tenedos coming, the Gods we hallowed there
Of home full fain, but not yet did Zeus the unyielding bear

Our homeward way in his heart, but raised up the strife again;
For the folk of King Odysseus, the wise-heart, shifty of men,
Went up on their rolling ships, and turned them about and went
Aback unto Atreus' son, for Agamemnon's content.
But I fled with the gathered ship-host that was wont with me to go,
For I knew of the bale and the bane that the God was devising to do.
Fled the warrior, the son of Tydeus, and egged on his fellows to flee.
But the yellow-haired Menelaus came late to our company:
At Lesbos he came upon us, as we schemed the long-drawn way,
Whether northing Chios the craggy, our ships we so should lay
Beside the island Psyria, that on our lee it lie,
Or else to the south of Chios pass windy Mimas by.
So we prayed the God for a token, and he set forth one in a while,
And bade us cleave mid ocean into Eubœa's isle,
That we at our best and swiftest might flee the bale and the bane.
Then arose the wind shrill piping and the keels sped on amain,
And ran o'er the way of the fishes, and by night and cloud we made
Geræstus; there to Poseidon the thighs of bulls we paid
A many, since thus we had measured so great a deal of sea.
But the fourth day it was ere in Argos Tydides' company,
That Diomede, Tamer of Horses, their good ships stayed by the shore.
But for me I made for Pylos, and the wind dropped never more
From the time when God first sent it across the sea to blow.

"So I came, dear child, unwitting, and nought of the others I know,
Nor who was saved of Achæans, nor what man had his bane:
But of all the knowledge that sitting within these halls I gain,
Thou shalt wot as is meet and right; I will hide nought; all will I tell
Now men say that the Myrmidon Folk, the spear-wont, fared home well,
E'en they whom the famous son of great-heart Achilles led,
And that well the son of Poias, Philoctetes the glorious, sped;

And Idomeneus brought unto Crete his fellows, every one
Who had 'scaped the war and the battle; the sea-flood swallowed none.
But ye, though afar ye are dwelling, of the son of Atreus have heard,
How he came to his home; how Ægisthus for him wove woful weird.
But the man, e'en he who did it, in wretched wise did he pay.
It is good that the son of the murdered be left for another day.
For he, he avenged his father, and slew his father's bane,
Ægisthus guileful of rede, who his famous father had slain.
And thou friend, so great and so fair as I behold thee now,
Be stout, that good word of thy fame mid the late-born folk may grow."

But Telemachus the heedful thus spake and answered again: 201
"O Nestor, O son of Neleus, great grace of Achæan men,
Full well did he avenge him, and Achæans far and near
Shall make his fame to be hearkened, that those who are coming may hear.
But would that the Gods might be giving e'en me so much of might,
That I on the Wooers might wreak me for their most grievous unright!
Whereas in their pride they fashion and devise me impious ill:
But of no such happy doings the Gods for me have will,
Nay, not for me nor my father; we must bear all e'en as we may."

Then thus did Nestor, the Rider of Gerenia, answer and say: 210
"O friend, since the word thou speakest and hereof thou mindest me,
Men say that thy mother's wooers a many now there be
In thy house, though thou wouldest it not, who devise thee evil fate.
Say then, art thou cowed as a craven, or liest thou under the hate
Of thy land and thy people hearkening what the voice of God doth speak?
Yet who knoweth but he returning their wrong one day shall wreak,
Whether alone he returneth or with all the Achæan men.
But ah! if the Grey eyed Athene would befriend thee now, as then,
In the days that were she cherished Odysseus, the glory of war,

Mid the Troy-folk, where we, the Achæans, so many a heart-grief bore.
For never saw I the God-folk love men in such open wise
As Pallas stood beside him to help before all eyes.
And if thee in her heart she would cherish, and befriend thee such a way,
Then some of these, meseemeth, should forget their wedding-day."

But Telemachus the heedful thus answered him and said:
"O father, thy word meseemeth to its end shall never be sped,
For a mighty word hast thou spoken, and great wonder holdeth me;
Nor shall this my hope be fulfilled, though the Gods would have it to be."

But the Goddess, the Grey-eyed Athene, thereto made answer and said:
"Telemachus, what is this word from the wall of thy teeth that hath sped?
For 'tis easy for God if he willeth, though far off, man to save.
But I for my part were fainer a many griefs to have
And come home safe in the ending, and see my returning day,
Than to come as came Agamemnon, and die on my hearth straightway;
For he fell by the wiles of Ægisthus and the woful wiles of his wife.
But not even the very God-folk, not even a loved man's life,
From the common death can deliver, when come is the fate full strong,
And the deadly doom is upon him that layeth men along."

But Telemachus the heedful thus answered thereunto:
"Let us speak hereof no further, though our hearts be full of woe.
For him there is no returning: for already, have no doubt,
Black doom and deadly ending have the Deathless meted out.
But one other word would I speak and ask of Nestor here,
Since he knoweth righteous wisdom above all that ever were;
For o'er three generations of men they say he hath been the king,
And unto mine eyes beholding he is as a deathless thing:
O Nestor, O son of Neleus, speak now true word unto me!

Agamemnon, son of Atreus, wide ruler, how died he?
Where then was Menelaus? What bale did he bring forth
For him, Ægisthus the wily, since he slew a man more worth?
Or was he not in Argos but wandering wide away,
Amid other dwellings of man-folk, when the man grew bold to slay?"

But the Rider of Gerenia, old Nestor, answered there:
"I will show thee now, O youngling, all things as they verily were.
For thou thyself hast an inkling of what deed hereof would have come
If the yellow Menelaus, from Troy returning home,
Had happed upon Ægisthus alive in the halls of his stead.
Then full surely on his body no earth had there been shed,
But the fowl and the dogs had feasted on the dead man as he lay
In the wold without the city, and no Achæan may
Would have raised the death-song o'er him; for a monstrous deed had he done.
Yea, there afar were we biding where many a deed we won,
While he in the nook of Argos, the horseland, sat at ease,
The wife of Agamemnon with wheedling words to please.
And indeed it is true that the woman for a while the foul deed spurned,
The glorious Clytemnestra, for in wisdom well was she learned.
And a minstrel was with her moreover, whom, when unto Troy he would speed,
Was the son of Atreus bidding that well his wife he should heed.
But when the fate of the Gods had bound her that fall she must,
Then into a desert island that man the minstrel thrust,
And left him there for the fowl to be a quarry and prey,
And longing he led her longing to his house and his home away.
Many thighs of beasts he burned on the altar of sacrifice,
And he hung up many adornments, both of gold and webs of price;
Whereas he had done the deed, and the thing unhoped in his heart.

"But we sailed while these things were adoing and from Troy did we depart,

We twain, Atrides and I, in goodwill and happiness.
But whenas we were making Sunium, the holy Athenian ness,
There Phœbus Apollo falling with kindly shafts amain
On the pilot of Menelaus, thereof he had his bane;
E'en as he held the tiller of the good ship fleeting fast;
Phrontis, the son of Onetor, who all tribes of men surpassed
In steering a ship when the storm-winds drive hard across the sea.
So aback was held Menelaus, though fain of the road was he,
That he might bury his fellow with all rites of the burial bed.

"But now, as in hollow ships o'er the wine-dark sea he sped,
And, speeding, to that steep headland of Malæa now was brought,
A road and a way full loathly far-seeing Zeus for him wrought;
And the blast of the wind shrill-piping he poured upon his host,
And the billows monstrous-swollen all mountain-high uptost.
Thence he sundered the host atwain: one half unto Crete did he drive,
Where about Jardanus' streams Cydonian people live.
Now a smooth rock thereby goeth to the water, sheer and steep,
The outermost ness of Gortys thrust forth in the darkling deep.
There the south-west driveth a billow against the leftward ness
To Phæstus, and small is the rock that wardeth the great seas' stress.
Thereon drave part of the ship-host, and hardly saved were the folk,
But the ships the might of the billows against the sea-rocks broke.
But as to those five, those others, the wind and the water bore
Their coal-blue prows and brought them anigh the Ægyptian shore.

"Thus then he fared, and gathering great store of goods and of gold,
Came on with his keels to the aliens and the folk of another fold.
But amidst all this Ægisthus at home wrought deeds right grim;
For the son of Atreus he slaughtered, and the folk were in bonds to him.
Seven years did he lord it over Mycenæ golden-great,

But the eighth year came Orestes the glorious, came his fate;
He betook him home from Athens and slew his father's bane,
Ægisthus, crafty of rede, who his famous father had slain.
He slew him, and then to the Argives gave the feast of the burial bed
Over his baleful mother and Ægisthus mightless and dead.
And that same day came Menelaus, the skilled in the voice of war,
And plenteous wealth was with him, the freight that his good ship bore.

"But thou, dear son, from thy homestead no longer be wandering wide,
Leaving thy wealth, and leaving such men in thine house to abide,
So utterly overweening, lest they eat up all from thee,
And share out all thy havings, and in vain shall thy wayfaring be;
But unto Menelaus I charge thee and bid thee to fare,
For he has come but newly to his home from otherwhere,
Yea, from men whence no man in his heart could have hope to win away
When once the winds and the whirlwinds had driven him far astray,
Into so mighty an ocean that not in one whole year
Could the very fowl flee from it, so great it is and drear.
So now depart with thy fellows in thy ship across the sea.
Or if of the land thou art liefer, I have twi-car and horses for thee;
And my sons are for thee moreover, and they shall bring thee there
Unto glorious Lacedæmon, and Menelaus the fair;
And thou thyself shalt beseech him that he tell thee the very truth.
And nought of lies will he tell thee, for most wise he is forsooth."

He spake, and the sun was setting and the dark came on amain,
And the Goddess, the Grey-eyed Athene, she spake and answered again:

"Yea, father, thou sayest it meetly, and good is this word of thine;
But betake ye to slicing the tongues and to blending of the wine,
That we unto Poseidon and all the Deathless may pour,

And so of our beds bethink us, for this is the rightful hour.
For the light is gone under the darkness, and no man doth it befit
To sit long at the feast of the Gods, but all of us homeward to flit."

So spake the Daughter of Zeus, and they hearkened her voice and her word;
And the water over their hands the serving-fellows poured, [them up,
And the swains to the bowls betook them, and with drink they brimmed
And dealt about to all men, and poured from cup unto cup.
And then they arose and poured forth, and cast the tongues on the fire;
But when they had poured, and had drunk each man to his heart's desire,
Then therewithal did Athene and godlike Telemachus yearn
To get them gone thenceforth, to their hollow ship to return:
Yet did Nestor hold them aback and with words did on them fall:

"Nay now, may Zeus forbid it, and the Deathless one and all,
That ye to your ship swift sailing should depart from me to-night,
As though from a poor man's dwelling and the house of a raimentless wight,
As from one who nothing of blankets or of rugs in his house doth keep,
That neither he nor his guest-friends full soft anights may sleep;
Whereas in my house are blankets and noble rugs good store.
Nay, ne'er shall the son beloved of the man Odysseus of yore
On the deck of his ship be lying, while I am living at least.
But thereafter my sons in my homestead shall abide the folk to feast,
Whoso may fare unto usward for the guesting of our stead."

Then the Goddess, the Grey-eyed Athene, in this wise answered and said:
"All good are thy words, dear father, and well it befitteth thee
That Telemachus do thy bidding; for fairer so shall it be;
And he with thee will be wending to sleep in thine house and thine hall.
But aboard of the coal-black ship will I be wending withal
To hearten up my fellows, and to tell them what hath betid,

For that I alone amid these men am the elder may not be hid;
And the rest they are but younglings, and for love's sake with us fare:
To Telemachus mighty of mood all equal in age they are.
So I in the black ship's hollow will sleep, and on the morn
To those great-souled Cauconians will I belike be borne,
Where owed unto me is increase; nor yet of yesterday,
Nor little it is. But this man, to thy house he hath wended his way,
Set him forth with thy sons and thy twi-car and give him horses at need,
E'en such as thou hast that are stoutest and swiftest-footed to speed."

So spake the Grey-eyed Athene, and like to an eagle was gone,
And wonder and awe held all men who were gazing thereupon;
And the old man marvelled indeed at the sight he had seen with his eyes,
And he took Telemachus' hand, and named him, and spake in such wise:

"Nought base I deem thee, O friend, and no weakling shalt thou be,
When the Gods in thine early days thus guide and further thee.
For none other was this of all those that Olympian houses hold,
Save the Daughter of Zeus, the War-glorious, the Trito-born from of old.
E'en she who honoured thy father mid the Argives in the strife.
But do thou, O Queen, be gracious! and give good glory of life
To me and to my children, and my wife of reverend grace;
And a heifer will I give thee, a yearling wide of face,
Untamed, whom no man ever beneath the yoke hath won:
E'en her to thee will I hallow, and her horns with gold shall be done."

Thus-wise he prayed, and Athene gave ear to the words he sped.
Then the Rider of Gerenia, old Nestor, these men led,
E'en his sons and his daughters' husbands, to the lovely house of his home.
But when to the house all-glorious of the king they now were come,
They sat them down in order on bench and noble seat,

And the elder blended the bowl with wine all honey-sweet,
E'en that which the handmaid, the goodwife, in its eleventh year
Had opened at last, and loosened the jar's head-binding gear.
This then in the bowl he blended, and many things did he pray,
The old man, as he poured to Athene, Zeus the Shield-bearer's May.
But when they had poured and had drunk as their hearts desired thereto,
The others thence departed and each to his house did go;
But Telemachus, son beloved of Odysseus' godlihead,
Did Nestor, Gerenian Rider, lead off to sleep and bed,
On the framed and jointed bedstead in the echoing cloister there,
By Pisistratus, leader of war-ranks, the lord of the ashen spear,
Who alone of his sons abided in his house and hall unwed:
But for him, he slept as his wont was, in the nook of his high-built stead,
Where his bed, and therewith his bed-gear, his queen-wife for him dight.

But when the Mother of Morning, Rose-fingered Dawn, shone bright,
The Rider, Gerenian Nestor, rose up from his bed straightway,
And gat him forth and sat him on the well-smoothed stones that lay
In the forefront of his homestead, before the high-built door,
White, polished, well-sleeked over: there in the days of yore
Would Neleus oft be sitting, as the Gods in council great;
But now to the House of Hades had he wended, tamed by fate.
And there in his turn sat Nestor, the Achæans' warder, the King,
Holding his staff; and about him were his gathered sons in a ring,
New come from their rooms. Echephron and Stratius, there they were;
Perseus was there, and Aretus, Thrasymedes, godhead's peer;
And to them came forth the sixth man, Pisistratus warfain and great.
So Telemachus the godlike amidst them they led to his seat,
And Nestor, Gerenian Rider, in their midst the word began:

"Loved sons, fulfil my desire in the swiftest wise ye can,

That of all the Gods from Athene I most the grace may gain,
Who to our glorious God-feast came manifest and plain.
Now let one go to the meadow, that, as swift as it may be done,
We have a heifer hither, with the neatherd driving her on ;
And let one to the black ship going of Telemachus, mighty of mind,
Fetch hither all his fellows, two only abiding behind.
And one to Laerces the goldsmith, the bidding let him say,
That he come the horns of the heifer with gold to overlay.
But here let the others be gathered, and let them bid withal
The handmaids to dight us the banquet in our glorious house and hall,
And to set forth the seats and the logs, and bear forth water fair."

He spake, and they fell to and hastened, and the heifer was speeded there
From the mead ; and thither came, from the swift ship shapely wrought,
The high-souled Telemachus' fellows : and the smith came there, and he
His smithying tools in his hand, his craft's fulfilling gear, [brought
To wit, his hammer and anvil, and his fire-tongs fashioned fair,
Wherewith the gold to smithy. And thither, to gather her meed
Of the hallowed gifts, came Athene. Then old Nestor of the Steed
Gave gold, and the craftsman wrought it, and therewith were the beast's horns done.
That thereof might the Goddess be glad as its fairness she looked upon.
Then Stratius and Echephron fair by the horns the heifer led;
And Aretus came from the chamber with a bowl with flowers bespread,
And therein the hand-washing water ; and his other hand did hold
The barley-meal maund : and stood forth Thrasymedes, war-biding and bold.
In his hand the axe well whetted all ready the heifer to hew ;
And Perseus held the blood-bowl. Then the rider Nestor 'gan do
The hand-washing and barley-sprinkling, and much prayer to Athene he sped
In the outset, and cast in the fire the forelock of the head.
But when they had prayed and cast forth the barley-meal thereon
Then drew anigh Thrasymedes the high-souled Nestor's son,

And he hewed and the beast's neck-tendons he sundered with the blade
And loosened the might of the heifer, and the whoop and the cry they made,
The daughters and the sons' wives, and the wife the reverend queen,
Eurydice, first-born daughter of Clymenus once had she been.
So they from the wide-wayed earth raised the beast and held her then,
And Pisistratus slaughtered her straightway, the leader of ranks of men.
But when the black blood had flowed forth and life the bones had left,
Then at once they sheared up the carcase, and the thighs thereof they cleft,
And all in due wise and wonted; and twofold wrapping they made
Of fat about them, and slices of the raw flesh on them laid.
On the faggots the elder burned them and poured on the gleaming wine,
But the youths stood by him and handled the forks five-fold of tyne;
But when burned up were the thighs, and the inwards were tasted aright,
They cut up the flesh, and the gobbets on spits for the roasting dight,
And they handled the spits sharp-pointed and roasted it then and there.

Meanwhile was Telemachus bathed by Polycaste the fair,
Of Nestor son of Neleus the youngest daughter and last;
And when she had washed his body and the olive oil o'er him cast,
And had done a frock upon him, and a fair cloak thereon laid,
From the bath he went, and his body as fair as a God's was made.
So he went and by Nestor's side, the Shepherd of Folk, did he sit.

But when they had roasted the outflesh, and drawn it off from the spit,
They sat and fell to feasting, and men of worth rose up
And poured the wine unto them in many a golden cup.
But when the yearning for meat and for drink they had done away,
Then the Rider, Gerenian Nestor, began to speak and to say:
"O sons, for Telemachus bring ye the well-maned horses fair,
And unto the chariot yoke them that he the way may wear."

He spake, and therewithal his word did they hearken and heed,
And straight the swift-foot horses to the car they yoked with speed,
And therein laid the store-maid bread and wine and dainty meat,
E'en such as kingfolk cherished of Zeus are wont to eat.
Then Telemachus went up straightway on the lovely-fashioned car,
And Pisistratus, son of Nestor, the chief of the men of war,
Went up on the car moreover, and caught in hand the rein,
And smote the steeds to be going, and unloth they sped to the plain ;
And the builded burg of Pylos, and the steep they left behind,
And daylong the yoke they were swaying that both the twain did bind.

But now the sun sank under, and dark lay on every road,
When they came their ways to Pheræ and Diocles' abode,
Of Orsilochus begotten, whom Alpheus did beget.
There nightlong they abided and guest-cheer for them he set.
But when the Mother of Daylight, Rose-fingered Dawn, shone clear,
They yoked their steeds and mounted the chariot painted fair.
Then they drove their ways from the forecourt, from the echoing cloister [sped,
And they smote the steeds to be going, and nothing loth they fled,
Till they came to the plain wheat-bearing, and fast their way they wore,
So speedily their going the swift-foot horses bore :
And so the sun sank under, and all ways were shadowed o'er

BOOK IV.

ARGUMENT.

TELEMACHUS COMETH WITH PISISTRATUS, SON OF NESTOR, TO MENELAUS AT SPARTA, AND HATH SOME TIDINGS OF HIS FATHER. THE WOOERS WAYLAY TELEMACHUS' RETURN. PENELOPE HATH A DREAM SENT FOR HER SOLACE BY ATHENE.

SO they came unto Lacedæmon in the hollow dales adown,
To the house of Menelaus, the lord of high renown,
And they found him holding a wedding to many a man of his kin,
Of his son and daughter the noble his house and his home within.
Now her to the son was he sending of Achilles, the cleaver of war,
As he yea-said and promised to give her by Troy in the days of yore;
And now the Gods for these to its end the wedding would speed;
So the maiden was he flitting to wend with chariot and steed
To the Myrmidon burg all-glorious, where the man was lord and king.
But the daughter of Alector from Sparta withal would he bring
For his last-loved son, Megapenthes, the mighty man born of a slave;
For now the Gods unto Helen no fruit of her body gave
Since the day when the lovely maiden, Hermione, she bare,
As the golden Aphrodite of body fashioned fair.

Thus then in the high-roofed hall were feasting, the neighbours and kin
Of the glorious Menelaus, and were merry therewithin;
And to them a goodly minstrel was harping and singing the lay;
And e'en with his song's beginning two tumblers fell to play,

And amidst the feasting folk they whirled about as they played.

But by the porch of the homestead those twain their horses stayed,
Telemachus the hero and Nestor's noble son,
And the swain, e'en Eteoneus, came forth and looked thereon,
Of the glorious Menelaus the handy fellow; so then
He went through the house to be telling thereof to the Shepherd of Men,
And drew anigh unto him, and set these words on the wing:
"There are stranger guests come hither, Menelaus God-bred king,
Two men that are like in fashion to the kin of mighty Zeus.
What say'st thou then? Their horses swift-footed shall we loose,
Or speed them on to another who to guest them may be fain?"

But the yellow Menelaus in wrath thus answered again:
"Eteoneus, son of Boethous, no fool thou wert wont to be,
But now as a child mere folly thou babblest unto me.
What! have we not eaten guest-cheer of other men, we twain,
Ere hither we got us home; if yet of Zeus we may gain
An end of trouble henceforward? Go, loose the guest-folks' steeds,
And bring the men in to be feasted according to their needs."

Then the swain from the hall departed, and called on those who were
Of the handy swains of service, along with him to fare;
And they the sweating horses from the yoke unharnessed straight
And tied them up to the mangers wherefrom the horse-kind ate,
And they cast the oats into them, and hoary barley withal;
Then they tilted up the chariot 'gainst the shining face of the wall,
And into the holy house brought the twain, much wondering
At what their eyes were beholding of the house of the Zeus-bred king;
For therein was a glory abiding as it were of the moon or the sun
In the high-roofed house of the famous, Menelaus the mighty one.

But when they for their eyes' rejoicing had gazed as they deemed it good,
They went to the well-smoothed bath-vats to wash them as they would;
And when the maids had washed them and with oil had sleeked them well,
They did the frocks upon them, and cloaks of close-set fell;
And they sat on the chairs beside him, Menelaus, Atreus' son,
And a damsel brought them water for their hands, and poured thereon
From a goodly golden ewer in a bowl of silver white.
Then the board well-smoothed and polished before them there she dight,
And a goodwife brought them bread, and set it down beside,
Of meat she made them welcome of such as did there betide.
And the sewer set forth the platters of flesh-meat manifold,
And therewithal beside them he set the cups of gold.

Then the yellow Menelaus, he greeted the twain and said:
"Now taste the meat and be merry; but when ye have broken bread
And have eaten, then will we ask you what manner of men ye be;
For in you the race of your fathers hath not failed utterly,
And ye are of men mace-wielding, and the kin of Zeus-bred kings,
For it is not in men that are base-born to beget such noble things."

With that word the fatted ox-chine, the roast, in hand did he take,
And gave them the very portion meted out for his honour's sake;
And therewith they stretched out their hands to the meat that before them lay.
But when of meat and of drink they had worn the longing away,
Then to the son of Nestor spake Telemachus, drawing anear,
Laying his head to his head that the others might not hear:

"O thou, the son of Nestor, to my heart the dearest of all!
Note thou the flashing of brass about the echoing hall,
The gleam of the gold, and amber, and silver, and ivory!
E'en such must the courts withinward of Zeus the Olympian be

For wealth untold: as I look my soul doth the wonder take."

But the yellow Menelaus was ware of the word he spake,
And he sent his voice to themward, and set such words on the wing:
"Dear son, no man that dieth may strive with Zeus the king,
For deathless are his houses, and his wealth may never die:
But of manfolk there may or may not be with me in wealth to vie.
Yet at least many things have I suffered, and have wandered far and near,
And about in ships have been flitted to come back in the eighth long year.
To Cyprus and Phœnicia and Ægypt have I strayed;
Æthiopia too and Sidon, and Erembian land we made,
And Lybia withal, where the lambs are full-horned from their very birth,
And thrice are the sheepkind yeaning in the space of one year of the earth;
Where neither king nor shepherd may ever lack to eat
Of either cheese or flesh-meat, or to drink milk fresh and sweet,
For yearlong there unceasing they yield to the milking-trough.
But while about I wandered and gat me gear enough,
That very while another was taking my brother's life,
In covert wise and unwares by the wiles of his wicked wife;
So in little joy am I ruling o'er all this wealth ye see.
Ye may know hereof from your fathers, whosoever they may be,
How much of grief I have suffered, how gone is my house of old,
That once was so goodly dwelt in, that such plenteous gear did hold.
Yea, would that I had but a third, and there still in my house to abide,
And that safe those men were living who long ago have died
In broad Troy far from Argos, the horseland of the earth!

"But while for all this I lament me, and grief in my soul has birth,
And oft in my halls here sitting my soul I satisfy
With bewailing of my sorrows, and oft lay sorrow by
(Since soon will a man be sated of lamentation chill);

Not so for all these do I sorrow as for one I sorrow still,
Whose memory maketh loathly my meat and my sleeping-tide,
For no one man of Achæans such labour did abide
As Odysseus wrought and laboured: and for him it was to be
But very toil and trouble; and enduring grief to me
That so long he wandereth houseless, while of him all tidings fail,
Whether he liveth or dieth. There too for him they wail,
Penelope wise of heart, and Laertes elder of days,
And Telemachus left in his homestead new-born when he went his ways."

He spake, and therewith the youngling to yearning grief he stirred,
And he dropped the tears from his eyelids as he of his father heard;
While before his eyes he was holding the cloak of purple dye
With both hands; but Menelaus beheld him heedfully,
And in his mind and his mood was he musing therewithal
If he should abide till the youngling to his mind his father should call,
Or whether he first should ask him and seek all matters to learn.

But while in his mind and his mood these matters did he turn,
Lo, Helen came from her chamber fragrant, high-vaulted of old;
And like unto Artemis was she, the Dame of the Shaft of Gold.
And there with her came Adraste, who set forth the well-wrought chair;
But the carpet of soft wool woven forth did Alcippe bear,
And Phylo a silver basket, the gift of Polybus' wife
Alcandra; in Thebes of Ægypt forsooth she weareth life,
Where of all the world most treasure the houses in them have.
But he to Menelaus two silver bath-vats gave,
Two caldrons withal three-footed, and of gold ten talents weight.
And his wife to Helen moreover gave goodly gifts and great:
A distaff of gold and a basket fashioned on wheels to run,
Of silver wrought; but its edges about with gold were done.

And e'en this it was that was carried and set down by Phylo the maid,
With the wrought yarn all fulfilled, and the distaff over it laid,
Reached out therefrom, with its head well charged with dark-blue wool..
So Helen sat in the chair and under her feet was the stool.

So she spake out words to her husband, and asked him heedfully:
"Know we, O Menelaus, Zeus-cherished, who these be?
And what men of men they avow them, who this our house would seek?
Shall I lie or speak out the truth? Nay, my mood would have me speak.
I say then that none hath been seen, whether man or woman it were,
(And a mighty wonder holds me as I gaze upon him there),
More like than this man to the son of Odysseus mighty of heart,
Telemachus, left in his homestead new-born when he needs must depart;
What time the Achæan war-host for the shameless, even for me,
Went up under Troy and were waking the war so mightily."

But the yellow Menelaus he answered her and spake:
"Of this thing and the likeness thou deemest note also did I take:
And e'en now when I called unto mind the tale of Odysseus, and told
Of his toil and his trouble for me, that was grievous and manifold,
Then this man from under his brows let a bitter tear fall down,
As before his eyes he was holding the lap of his purple gown."

Then Pisistratus, son of Nestor, spake out and answered again:
"Menelaus, son of Atreus, Zeus-cherished leader of men,
Verily this is the son of him of whom thou hast told;
But wise is the man of his mood, and were shamed were he overbold
Hither to come, and be first to put forth the pushing word
Before thee, whose voice unto us is the voice of a God and a Lord.
But for me, the Gerenian Rider, e'en Nestor bade me to go
And guide the man hither to theeward, for thee would he look on and know,

That some word thou may'st teach unto him or some work that he may
For the son of an absent father in his house hath many an ill [fulfil.
When he hath none other helpers, as with this man now doth it fare.
For far away is his father, nor others hath he there
Who may ward him amid the people and thrust the evil away."

But the yellow Menelaus thus fell to answer and say:
"Out on it! here to my house hath come the loved man's son,
Who for me hath laboured sorely and such doughty deeds hath done.
And I said that came he hither, above all Argive men
I would greet him; if Zeus of Olympus farseeing had given us then
Return to our house and our home in our swift ships over the sea,
I had given him dwelling in Argos, and a burg wherein to be,
And from Ithaca forth had I brought him, with his son and all his gear
And all his folk; and one city of those that are dwelt in here,
Of those that I lord it over, for him had I wasted clean.
Then oft in this homestead meeting together had we been,
And nothing then would have sundered our love and our delight,
Till the dark and the cloud of death had wrapped us up in the night.
But God for such things happening the grudge against us bore,
Since him only made he hapless returning never more."

He moved their hearts to weeping with the words that thus he said.
There wept the Argive Helen, the Zeus-begotten maid;
Telemachus was weeping, and the son of Atreus wept;
Nor yet the son of Nestor his eyes unwetted kept;
For he in his heart remembered Antilochus undone,
The noble warrior slaughtered by the bright Dawn's glorious Son:
It was him he held in memory as he let these words forth fly:

"O Atreus' son, the wisest of all the men that die,

Would the ancient Nestor name thee whenso we thought of thee
In our halls, and each of other asked what-like thou might'st be.
Yet heed me, I pray, if thou mayest, since for my part indeed
I love not weeping at supper; and now doth the Day-dawn speed,
And at hand is the Mother of Morning: though no shame I think it yet
To weep for the man that dieth, and the day of his doom hath met,
Since there is no other honour that is left for the hapless dead [head.
Save the tears to run over the cheeks, and the clipping the hair of the
Lo, I had a brother that perished, nor the worst of the Argives was he.
Yea, thou belike wilt have seen him, but he never was seen of me,
Nor ever we met together: but men of Antilochus tell
That he outwent all in running, and withal was a warrior fell."

But the yellow Menelaus thus spake and answered again:
"O friend, hereof thou speakest as a heedful man among men
Would speak, and would do; yea, even were he elder-born than thy youth;
For e'en such a man is thy father, so wise are the words of his mouth;
And easy it is to know the seed of such an one
For whom in wedding and getting good fortune Zeus hath spun.
But he unto Nestor hath given henceforward for ever to bide
In his homestead, and ever smoothly toward age and the end to glide;
While his sons should be wise withal, and right good the spear to throw.
Now let us away with the weeping that we happed upon e'en now,
And betake us again to supper, and the water let men pour
On our hands; then betimes on the morrow shall tales be told once more:
'Twixt me and Telemachus then shall all speech to an end be sped."

He spake, and over their hands the water Asphalion shed,
The handy swain of the King Menelaus, glorious and great,
And they reached their hands therewith to the feast and the ready meat.

But now did the Zeus-born Helen on other matters think,
And she cast a thing and a drug in the wine whence they would drink,
The queller of grief and of anger, that lulleth all evil asleep;
And when this in the bowl is mingled and thereof one drinketh deep,
Then all day long o'er his cheek no tear adown shall fall,
Not e'en if his father lie dead and his mother were dead withal;
Nay, not if his brother before him the brazen edge should smite,
Or his well-loved son were slaughtered and his eyes beheld the sight.
Such goodly drugs and crafty the daughter of Zeus did own,
And Polydamna gave them, the wife of Ægyptian Thôn,
Where most drugs of the world all over the corn-kind acres bear;
And many are hale for the mingling, and many are deadly and drear.
And every man of the leeches of that land is skilled indeed
Above all men; for truly are they Pææon's seed.

But when in the bowl she had put it and the wine she had bidden pour,
Forthwith she betook her to speaking, and said the word once more:
"Menelaus, son of Atreus, Zeus-cherished, and ye twain,
Sons of the good and the gallant, since turn and turn again
Zeus giveth good and evil, and of all things hath he might,
Be sitting here and feasting within our halls to-night,
With spoken tales be merry. Hear one befitting well;
For not with words may I number all tales that erst befell
Of the toils of Odysseus the patient, and all that him betid.
But one alone will I tell of that the brave man dared and did
In Troy-town, where the Achæans full many an evil bore.
For he on his own body laid grievous stripes and sore,
And with loathly rags on his shoulders, and e'en as a slave did he go,
And came his ways to the city and the wide ways of the foe.
So hid in the alien likeness of a beggar was he then;
But nought forsooth was he such-like by the ships of Achæan men.

In that shape went he down into Troy, and no man knew him there
But I alone : I knew him e'en in that guise and gear.
Therewith I questioned him straitly, but he shunned it with crafty lore ;
But at last, when I had washed him and with oil had sleeked him o'er,
And had set the raiment on him, and had sworn an oath of might
That never amid the Trojans would I bring Odysseus to light,
Till he came to the booths of battle and the swift-going ships of the sea,
Then all the Achæan counsel he opened out unto me,
And many an one of the Trojans with the long-edged brass he slew,
And came his ways to the Argives and therefrom much knowledge drew.

"Shrill wailed the Trojan women, the others, but I was fain ;
For turned was my mind and my mood to get me home again :
And now I loathed the blindness from Aphrodite's hand,
Wherewith she led me away from the well-loved father-land.
Apart from my child, and my chamber, and my lord she sundered me there,
Though neither in wit was he lacking, nor in form of his body fair."

But the yellow Menelaus thus answered thereunto :
"Yea, all these things, O wife, hast thou told in manner due ;
I have known the mind and the counsel of many a man of war,
O'er a mighty deal of the earth have I passed and wandered afar,
But never anywhere yet have I seen such a thing with mine eyes
As the heart that Odysseus had of the patient mind and wise.
Yea, and this deed, this other that the stout man dared and did,
When in the Horse well-shapen we, the best of the Argives, were hid,
And for all the Trojan people we bore the death and the doom.
For then thou camest thither, and some God had bidden thee come
Who on giving the gain and the glory to the folk of Troy was bent.
And Deiphobus the godlike withal beside thee went.
Three times about thou wentedst and handledst the hollow snare,

And on all the best of the Danaans by name thou calledst there,
And the voice of all wives of the Argives wert thou feigning cunningly.
Now there were the son of Tydeus and the great Odysseus and I,
All we were sitting amidmost and hearkened thy cry and thy speech,
And we twain, Tydides and I, were minded each and each
Either to rise and come forth, or to answer thee back from within;
But Odysseus there withheld us, though we longed that work to win:
And so we sons of Achæans, in silence sat we all,
Save that Anticlus of all men with words would answer and call,
But on his mouth Odysseus laid his most mighty hand,
And held it there and stayed him, and saved the Achæan band,
Till at last did Pallas Athene from usward lead thee away."

But Telemachus the heedful thus answered and 'gan say:
"Menelaus, son of Atreus, Zeus-cherished people's lord,
Woe worth! for not even so the woful weird might he ward,
Not even though within him he bore an iron heart.
But come now, turn us bedward, that we others for our part
May have our fill of slumber, and in sweet sleep be laid."

He spake, and the Argive Helen straightway the handmaids bade
To lay the beds in the cloister, and over them to do
Fair purple rugs, and thereover the coverlets to strew,
And over all to be casting the blankets thick and fair.
Forth then from the hall they wended, and torch in hand they bare,
And arrayed the beds, and the marshal therefrom the guest-folk led,
And in the porch of the homestead they laid them down abed,
Telemachus the warrior, and Nestor's noble son;
But Atrides slept in the nook of his house high-builded and done,
And beside him the long-robed Helen, the glory of women, lay.

But when shone out the Mother of Morning, Rose-fingered Early Day,
From his bed uprose Menelaus, the good at the battle-word,
And clad him; and over his shoulders he hung his sharpened sword,
And unto his sleek-skinned foot-soles fair-fashioned sandals tied,
And like to a God to look on forth then from his chamber he hied;
And so to Telemachus came he, and named him and spake the word:
"What need hath brought thee hither, Telemachus the lord,
To Lacedæmon the Holy, o'er the broad back of the sea?
Thine own or a common matter? Speak straight and plain to me."

But Telemachus the heedful this word in answer spoke:
"Zeus-cherished son of Atreus, Menelaus leader of folk,
I came that thou mightest tell me of my father some true tale:
But my house is being devoured; the fat lands to fallow fail,
And the house is filled with the foemen, and oft and every day
My knock-kneed shambling oxen and my huddling sheep they slay,
Those Wooers of my mother with insolence fulfilled:
So now to thy knees have I hied me, if thou may'st be so willed,
To tell of his woful death-day if thou saw'st it with thine eyes,
Or from any other wanderer hast heard the tale arise
—This man, his mother bore him to most exceeding woe—
But have no respect of my sorrow or be soft and soothing now,
But tell me all the story what wise the man thou hast seen.
And I pray thee if ever my father, the noble Odysseus, hath been
As good as his word unto thee of the thing that he promised to do
Amid the folk of the Trojans, the land of Achæan woe,
Of these things for me bethink thee, and tell me the very truth."

Then from wrath-burdened mind Menelaus the fair thus answered the [youth:
"Out on it! how are these Wooers thus minded? yea and why
In the bed of a great-heart man will they, the puny, lie?

As when some hind hath been laying in a mighty lion's lair,
Her little fawns new-born, unweaned, and she leaveth them there,
And pasturing seeketh the knolls and the dales all grass bespread.
But lo ! it befalleth thereafter that he cometh back to his bed,
And unto them both he dealeth a dreadful doom straightway ;
And a dreadful doom for these men shall Odysseus deal on a day.
Grant Zeus the Father, Athene, and Apollo, that it might fall,
That being such a man as he showed him by Lesbos' well-built wall,
When he stood against Philomeleides, and the strife of wrestling had,
And threw him a mighty fall, and all the Achæans were glad—
Might Odysseus but meet those Wooers such a man as then was he,
Short then were their fated life-days, and bitter their wedding should be.
But of this whereof thou beseechest nought crooked or beside
The very sooth will I tell thee, and nought with guile will I hide.
But all that which I had from the Elder, the Unerring-one of the Sea,
No word thereof will I cover or huddle it up from thee.

"The Gods in Ægypt held me, though hither would I be gone,
Since the gifts an hundred-folded for them I had not done,
And ever the Gods would have us of their bidding mindful to be.
Now there is a certain island amidst of the wave-washing sea,
That Pharos is named of men-folk, from Ægypt lying there
As far as in one day's sailing a hollow ship may fare ;
When fast behind her follows the sea-wind piping shrill ;
And therein is a handy haven, where the shapely ships that fill
Their store of the deep black water they drag down to the seas.
There for twenty days God held us, and never came the breeze,
No breath o'er the salt seas blowing ; though such be born indeed
O'er the broad back of the seaflood the fleeting ships to speed.
There had all our victual perished, and all the might of our men,
If a certain of the Godfolk had not pitied and saved me then,

E'en the daughter of Proteus the mighty, the Elder of the Sea,
Eidothea hight, whose mind was mightily moved by me.
For she met me wandering alone as apart from my fellows I went,
Who over the isle-shore scattered fished on with angles bent;
For indeed their bellies constrained them, and hunger pinched them sore.
So she drew anigh me and spake, and the word to mewards bore:

"'Art thou but simple, O Stranger, and exceeding wanting in wit?
Or wanton and heedless art thou? Or thy grief thou lovest it?
That so long in this isle thou art holden, and no issue may'st thou find,
While the heart of thy folk is failing and minished is their mind?'

"She spake, but I took up the word and answered for my part:
'Nay, now to thee will I tell it, since one of the Gods thou art,
That unwilling here am I holden; and this is the tale to tell,
That I trespass against the Deathless who in the wide heaven dwell.
But since the Gods know all things, do thou speak out and say
Which one of the Deathless hath hindered and bound me back from my way
And my wending back, and my going across the fishy main?'

"So I spake; but that Godhead's glory thus answered me again:
'Yea to thee, O friend, will I tell it as clearly as I may.
Here haunteth the Sea-wight, the Elder, that never goeth astray,
Proteus the deathless of Ægypt, who throughly knoweth all
The deeps of the sea; of Poseidon the very bounden thrall:
And they say that he is my father and begat me once on a while.
Now mightest thou compass an ambush to take the man by guile,
He should tell thee of thy faring, and the way that is meeted for thee,
Whereby thou shalt get thee homeward across the fishy sea.
Yea, thou dear unto Zeus, he shall tell thee, if thereof thou hast the will,

What thing in thine house hath befallen, be it good, or be it ill,
While afar and long thou hast wandered and laboured thy way with pain.'

" She spake, and I took up the word and answered her again :
' Yea now, for this Ancient of Gods do thou devise the snare,
Lest he perchance escape me foreseeing and beware.
For 'tis hard for a man that dieth against a God to prevail.'

" I spake and that Godhead's glory again took up the tale :
' Yea, all shall I tell thee, O friend, that thereof thou have no doubt :
When up to the midmost heaven the sun hath wended about,
The Sea-floods' Elder unerring cometh up from the brine outright,
Along with the breath of the west-wind with the darkling ripple dight,
And in the hollow places of the rocks he falleth asleep,
And about him the flock of the sea-calves, the brood of the Maid of the Deep,
Lie sleeping gathered together, come up from the hoary sea,
And they breathe forth a bitter savour of the brine where the flood-wells be.
Now thither will I lead thee when the dawn beginneth to show,
And lay thee there all duly : but three whom thou dost know
To be the best of thy fellows from thy fair-decked ships choose well.
But that Elder's baleful magic to thee will I fully tell :
For first unto numbering his sea-calves and telling them o'er will he fall,
But when his count is accomplished, and he hath beheld them all,
Then lieth he down amidst them, as a shepherd amidst of his sheep.
But so soon as ye have beheld him that he lieth there asleep,
Then mind ye of your starkness and to your might look ye,
That ye hold him, as sore as he striveth, and longeth to be free.
He will try it and turn into all things ; all such as creep upon earth,
And he will be the water, and the fire that of God hath birth.
But all unmoved do ye hold him, and press him all the more.
But when he shall speak unto you in the shape that he had before,

And he being then nought other than ye saw him lying asleep,
Then refrain your might and loosen that Elder of the Deep.
But ask him which of the Gods it is that is hard on thee,
And ask of thine homeward faring, and thy road o'er the fishy sea.'

"She spake, and therewithal dived under the billowy flood;
But unto my ships I wended where hauled on the sands they stood,
And with many things as I went my mind was darkened o'er.
But when at last I was come to the sea and the ships and the shore,
Our supper there we dighted, and the deathless night came on,
And there on the salt-sea beach the slumber and sleep we won.
But when the Mother of Morning, Rose-fingered Dawn, shone clear,
By the side of the wide-wayed seaflood in that hour did I fare,
Many things of the Godfolk praying: and I had with me fellows three,
E'en such as of wont I trusted when any deed was to be.

"But she meanwhile went under the broad breast of the main,
And with four skins of the sea-calves came up from the sea again,
And all were new-flayed, for she devised for her father a snare;
So then in the sand of the sea-beach she scooped for us each a lair,
And sat and abode our coming till we neared her down on the beach.
Then she laid us all in order, and a skin cast over each.
Now our ambush was like to be grim, for indeed the baleful stench
Of the sea-bred beasts sore grieved us as we lay in the lurking-trench,
For who indeed would lie down and sleep by a sea-born whale?
But she saved us, and found us a solace that was of much avail,
For the deathless sweet-breathed savour she brought, and the same did lay
Beneath the nostril of each man, and the whale-stench did away.

"Through the morning there were we biding, and patient hearts we bore,
Till the calves from the sea came flocking and pressing up ashore,

And laid them down on the sea-beach in order all around.
But at noon from the sea came the Elder, and there his calves he found
Fat fed, and he went o'er their order, and their number did he tell; 449
And us first mid the whales did he number, and no doubt his soul befell
Of the guile and the craft we devised him; but he lay down to sleep at the last.
Then we whooped and fell upon him, and our hands about him cast.
And nothing then did the Elder forget of his ancient guile;
For first a well-maned lion he was, and then in a while
A dragon he was, and a panther, and a boar of mighty make,
And wet water withal, and a tree that aloft its leaves did shake.
But unblenching there we held him, and patient hearts we bore.
But when he was grieved and weary, that Elder of ancient lore,
Then was he fain of asking, and bespake me words, and said:

"'What God, O son of Atreus, this rede for thee hath made, 460
That by guile thou hast got me unwilling; what wouldst thou that I do?'

"So he said, and I spake unto him and answered thereunto:
'Thou knowest, O Ancient; why then dost thou wind thy question about?
For here in this isle am I holden, and can find me no way out,
And hence the heart within me is worn and brought alow:
Now therefore do thou tell me, since the Gods all matters know,
Which one of the Deathless hindereth, and ever bindeth me,
From my homeward road and my faring across the fishy sea?'

"So I spake, and he in turn made answer in such wise:
'Yea, thee it behoved most surely to make fair sacrifice 470
To Zeus and the Gods ere ye wended, that as swiftly as might be
Ye should win to the land of your fathers as ye sailed the wine-dark sea.
Now to thee is the doom not meeted to behold thy friends and thy kin,
And to come to the land of thy fathers, and thine house well-builded therein,

Before thou hast got thee again to the River of Ægypt of old,
And the water fallen from Zeus; and the gifts an hundred-fold
Thou hast done to the Deathless Gods who dwell in the wide-spread heaven;
And then by the Gods shall thy way and the road that thou wouldest be [given.'

"So he said, and thereat within me my very heart would break,
Because he bade me backward the Ægyptian land to make,
And wend o'er the darkling sea-flood a long and weary way;
Wherefore in words I answered, and thus to him did say:
'Yea, all will I do, O Ancient! in such wise as thou biddest me do.
But I prithee tell me hereof, and speak but the word that is true.
Came those Achæans home a-shipboard safe and hale,
Whom we left there, I and Nestor, when from Troy town we did sail?
Or else the bitter bane on his ship hath any found?
Or amidst the hands of well-willers when the spindle of war he had wound?'

"So I spake; but again he answered, and in this wise took up the tale:
'Atrides, why dost thou ask me? since thee it shall nowise avail
To know and to seek out my mind; but this to thee I tell,
That not long shalt thou bide unweeping when all thou knowest well.
For of these a many were quelled, and left was many an one.
But of all the brass-clad Achæans of the champions perished none
On the homeward way save twain: and thou know'st of the battle strife:
And one yet mid the wide sea somewhere is hoarded and hath his life.
Amid the long-oared ships was Ajax quelled indeed,
For on to the edge of Gyræ him did Poseidon speed,
And on to the mighty rock-walls he drew him safe from the sea.
And there his bane had he 'scaped, though loathed of Athene was he.
But he from a mind bewildered a word o'erweening cast,
How that now, in despite of the Gods, from the deep of the sea he had passed.
But him and his monstrous boasting then did Poseidon hear,

And straight in his mighty hands he caught up his three-tyned spear,
And therewith the rock Gyræan he smote, and clave it atwain,
So that part in its place was abiding, and a fragment fell in the main,
E'en that whereon Ajax was sitting when his mind was clouded o'er.
Him then to the billowy sea-flood down the endless deep it bore,
And thus and there he perished and the salt sea-water drank.
But thy brother fled from destruction, and thence away he shrank
In the hollow ships; for Heré the high queen saved him there.
But e'en as unto the headland of Malea he drew near,
The whirlwind snatched him away and him thenceforward drave,
Lamenting very sorely, across the fishy wave,
To the outermost land and the house where Thyestes dwelt of old;
But as then his son Ægisthus that dwelling-place did hold.
But when from even thence safe seemed his faring home,
And again fair wind gave the Gods, and he to his house was come,
O then the land of his fathers in joy he went thereon!
And he touched the land and he kissed it, and the hot tears many an one,
From him were they pouring adown as he saw his land and was glad.
But him was the watcher beholding from the watching-place he had,
Held there by the wily Ægisthus, who had promised to give him of gold
Two talents' weight for a guerdon. There watch yearlong did he hold,
Lest the King should slip by and be mindful of his courage fierce and fell.
He now to the homestead hurried to the Folk-shepherd tidings to tell.
And straightway that Ægisthus devised a cunning snare,
For twenty men from the township he chose, of the best that were there,
And set them to lurk: but elsewhere he bade the banquet dight,
And with chariots and horses he wended to bid thereto forthright
Agamemnon the Shepherd of Folk; and he pondered the evil deed.
For all unawares and feasting the King to his bane did he lead,
And slaughtered him there as men slaughter a fatted ox in the stall.
Nor yet of Atrides' fellows was any man left at all,

Nor any man of Ægisthus : but in the halls they died.'

" He spake the word, and all broken did the heart within me abide.
And I wept on the sea-sand sitting, and desire in my heart was done
To be living any longer or to look on the light of the sun.
But when I was weary of weeping and wallowing on the ground,
The unerring sea-bred Elder a word for me he found :

" ' No longer, son of Atreus, weep on so wearily,
For of no avail shall we find it ; but as swiftly as may be
Seek out what way ye may wend you aback to your father's land.
For either alive shall ye meet him, or Orestes hath been beforehand
And hath slain him, and ye shall happen upon his funeral feast.'

" He spake, and the heart within me and the proud soul in my breast
Once more had rest and solace of all my sore lament,
And I lifted up my voice and a word on the wing I sent :
'Then I know concerning these men, but a third didst thou speak of to me
Whom thou saidst alive was hoarded somewhere in the wide-spread sea,
Or dead ? for I long to hearken though it bring me grief to have heard.'

" So I spake, but he spake again, and gave me an answering word :
' The son of Laertes it is, whose home is the Ithacan stead ;
And I in an island beheld him, as plenteous tears he shed
In the house of the Nymph Calypso ; and perforce she holdeth him there,
So that he may not wend him to his fatherland to fare.
For now indeed no fellows and no oar-dight ships hath he,
E'en such as thence might speed him o'er the broad back of the sea.
But, Zeus-cherished Menelaus, to thee it shall not come
In the horse-kind land of Argos to meet thy death and doom.
But unto the fields Elysian and the wide world's utmost end,
Where dwells tawny Rhadamanthus, the Deathless thee shall send,

Wherein are the softest life-days that men may ever gain;
No snow and no ill weather, nor any drift of rain;
But Ocean ever wafteth the wind of the shrilly west,
On menfolk ever breathing, to give them might and rest;
Because thou hast wedded Helen, and God's son art said to be.'

"And withal at that word of his he went under the billowy sea,
And unto the ships and my fellows the godlike I wended withal,
While many a darksome shadow about my heart did fall;
But when at last to the ships and the sea-side we had won,
Then all we set out supper, and Deathless Night came on,
And withal we laid us down and slept on the sea-beach there.
But when the Mother of Morning, Rose-fingered Dawn, shone clear,
Then first the ships we shoved adown to the holy sea,
And we set the masts and the sails in the ships wrought evenly,
And withal aboard went our fellows, and on the thwarts took seat,
And in orderly fashion sitting with the oars the grey sea beat.

"Back then to the River of Ægypt, Zeus-fed, the ships I brought,
And the gifts a hundred-folded all duly done I wrought;
But when of the Gods undying I had stayed the evil will,
I heaped up the howe to my brother that his fame might be quenchless still.
This done we wended us homeward, and the Deathless gave to me
Fair wind, and sent us swiftly to the land where we would be.

"But come now, I bid thee tarry within my house and hall
Until the eleventh day, or the twelfth day, shall befal,
When in goodly wise will I speed thee and give good gifts to thee—
Three steeds and a fair-smoothed twi-car; and another gift shall be
A goodly cup wherewith to the Deathless Gods to pour,
That of me thou mayest be mindful each day and evermore."

But Telemachus the heedful thus answering fell to say :
" No long while, son of Atreus, my parting-tide delay.
Forsooth yearlong were I willing to sit here by thy side,
And in my soul no longing for kindred or home would abide ;
For wondrous joy I deem it thy word and thy tale to hear.
But now are my fellows wearying as they bide in Pylos the fair ;
And forsooth for a space of time in thine house hast thou holden me.
But the gift, whatso thou wilt give me, an heirloom let it be.
For to Ithaca take I no horses, but leave them here as a gain
To thee ; for thou rulest over a mighty stretch of plain.
And there groweth the lote-grass plenty, and withal the galingale,
And there wheat and rye and barley, white, wide-spread, shall not fail.
But in Ithaca are no courses wide-reaching, nor any mead ;
A goatland : yet unto me more sweet than the land of the steed.
For not mead-rich nor horse-driving are the isles that lie in the sea :
And Ithaca, least of all islands, for such things fitting shall be."

So he spake ; but smiled Menelaus the deft at the battle-shout,
And stroked him down with his hand and named him and spake out :
" Yea, good is thy blood and begetting, dear child, as thou speakest so ;
And for thee these things will I change as I have the might to do.
And of all the stored-up treasure within mine house that lies
I will give thee the gift most goodly, and that which is most of price.
A fair-wrought bowl will I give thee, of silver wrought throughout,
But of gold its lips are fashioned that go all round about.
It was fashioned by Hephæstus, and Phædimus the king
Of Sidonians gave it unto me, whom his house was covering,
When I was about departing. Now to thee will I give it to take."

Thus then about such matters there each unto each they spake,
And the feasting-folk drew anear to the house of the king divine,

And sheep withal were they leading, and bringing heart-gladdening wine;
And their wives of the goodly head-gear bore in the wheaten bread,
And in the halls were they busy and the banquet there they spread.

But before the hall of Odysseus the Wooers pastime made,
With casting the quoits and the goat-spears on a level floor well laid,
Where with pride all overweening they erst were wont to be;
But there was Antinoüs sitting, with Eurymachus godlike to see;
And there were the chiefs of the Wooers and the doughtiest of all those.
But to them now came Noemon, son of Phronius, and stood close,
And spake to Antinoüs thus, and answer of him sought:

"Antinoüs, wot we at all, or perchance in our minds wot nought,
When cometh Telemachus back from Pylos of the sand?
For he went away with my ship, whereof need now cometh to hand:
Since to Elis the wide would I journey, for twelve brood-mares there have I,
And their suckling mules toil-patient untamed around them lie.
And fain would I drive away one and tame him to my need."

He spake and in heart they marvelled, for as yet they deemed not indeed
That he unto Pylos was gone, but that in the country-side
Among the sheep, or maybe with the swineherd, he yet did abide.

Then Antinoüs, son of Eupithes, the word to Noemon sent:
"Tell me truly now, when went he, and what lads with him went?
Were they Ithacan swains well-chosen, or his thralls and hirelings?
Or was his might so mighty to accomplish e'en these things?
And hereof the verity say thou, that I know full certainly.
Thy black ship, took he her perforce 'gainst the will of thee,
Or freely didst thou give her, since with words therefor he prayed?"

Then Noemon, son of Phronius, he answered him and said :
"I gave him the same of my freewill ; for how otherwise might one fare
When such a man so craved it with his soul so laden with care?
For hard it is such asking and such a gift to gainsay.
But the swains who are his fellows are the best, were we away,
Amid all the folk. Now I noted their Captain aboard, and he
Was Mentor, or else some God e'en as like to him as may be.
And thereat indeed I wonder, for at day-dawn yesterday
I saw the goodly Mentor, though to Pylos by then on his way."

So he spake, and away he wended toward his father's house and hall ;
But those twain, a great amazement on their haughty souls 'gan fall ;
And they set down the Wooers together, and their game and their play they brake,
And Antinoüs, son of Eupithes, a word amid them spake,
Sore grieved, and his blackened heart was fulfilled with monstrous ire,
And the eyes of him moreover were like to a flaming fire.

"Out on it ! great is the deed, and done high-handedly,
Telemachus he and his journey ! and we deemed it would not be.
In despite of us all hath the youngling departed just e'en as he would,
And hath hauled down his ship and hath chosen from the folk all the better than good.
Now a waxing ill shall he be henceforth ; and may Zeus o'erthrow
His might ere a heavy trouble he fashion for us to grow.
But a swift-sailing ship and a crew of twenty give ye to me,
That I may waylay his goings and watch the frith of sea
Betwixt Ithaca the island and Samé's craggy shore.
So, sailing after his father, may he hap on troubles sore."

He spake, and all yeasaid him, and egged on his intent,
And all they, straight arising, to the house of Odysseus went.
But no long while it was ere their word Penelope knew,

And the deed that the Wooers devised in the depths of their soul to do.
For Medon the henchman told her, who a word thereof did win
As he stood without the forecourt while they wove the rede within.
So through the house with the tidings to Penelope he ran,
And e'en as he went o'er the threshold she spake unto the man:

"Henchman, and why have the Wooers, the high-born, sent thee forth?
Is it to bid the handmaids of Odysseus, the mighty of worth,
To cease from their work, for them the feast and the banquet to set?
Would that they wooed me no more, nor gathered anywhere met!
Would that the last and the latest of feasts they had feasted here!
Ah ye, that gathered together such plenteous life-store wear
Of Telemachus wise-hearted, never yet then have ye heard,
When little ye were, your fathers of aforetime tell the word
Of what a man was Odysseus among the men of their day.
How no man of the folk would he wrong, and no word of unright would say.
Howbeit 'tis ever the fashion of holy kings and great
That this one will they love of manfolk, and that other one will they hate.
But he to no man ever did any deed of unright.
But for you, your shameless souls are shown and come to light:
Nor forsooth doth all well-doing the fruit of kindness bear."

Then Medon, skilled in prudence, thuswise he answered her:
"Ah well it were, O Queen, that this were the worst of the ill;
But indeed a grievous matter, a thing more grievous still,
These Wooers are now devising: may Zeus not bring it to pass!
For Telemachus now are they eager to slay with the whetted brass,
As he wendeth him hither homeward; for he went of his father to hear,
To Pylos exceeding goodly, and Lacedæmon the fair."

So he spake, and her knees were loosened and the heart within her failed,

And a long while over her mouth the speechlessness prevailed,
And her eyes were filled with tears and her full sweet voice fell dead.
But at last she spake with words, and answered him and said :

" Henchman, why then went my child, and wherefore needed he
To fare on the ships swift-sailing that to men are the steeds of the sea,
And over the mighty waste of the wallow of waters they wend ?
Doth he so that his name among manfolk may perish and come to an end ?"

But her then Medon answered, in prudence skilled and good :
" I wot not if one of the Godfolk hath urged him, or his own mood
Drave him on to fare unto Pylos some tidings thence to get
If his father were wending homeward, or what fateful doom he hath met."

So speaking, straight he departed to the house of Odysseus the fair :
But soul-wasting grief enwrapped her, nor yet in any chair
Did she endure to be sitting, though her house had many an one.
On the threshold of her chamber much-wrought she sat her down
And piteously bewailed her, and around moaned her handmaids there,
As many of young or of old as about the homestead were.
To these amidst plenteous wailing thus spake Penelope :

' Hearken, O friends ! the Olympian much grief hath given to me
Beyond all other women that with me were born and bred :
For first my glorious husband, the lion-heart, is dead,
Bright with all worth and valour past every Danaan man,
Whose fame was abroad in Hellas and through mid Argos ran :
And now my son beloved from our halls have the whirlwinds rent,
And no tidings left : for I knew not the hour when he hastened and went.
O cruel ! that none among you should have had the thought in her head,
Though well ye knew what was toward, to lead me forth from my bed

In that nick of time when the youngling on his hollow black ship went;
For I, if I had wotted that on such a way he was bent,
Then verily had I stayed him for as fain of the road as he were,
Or dead should he have left me in these halls of the homestead here.
But now let a handy swain bid Dolius hither to come,
The thrall that my father gave me when here I was wending home,
And who keepeth my orchard of trees, that as swift as may be done
He sit beside Laertes and tell him how all hath gone,
If he in his mind mayhappen may weave some rede of avail,
And going out mid the people 'gainst those may raise the wail,
Who his seed and the seed of Odysseus the godlike are eager to slay."

But her loved nurse Euryclea in turn did answer and say:
"Dear Queen, now whether thou slay me straightway with the ruthless sword,
Or let me live on in the homestead, from thee will I hide no word.
For of all these things have I wotted, and all that he bade me I gave,
Both bread and honey-sweet wine; but a great oath of me did he have
To tell thee nothing hereof till the twelfth day came to hand,
Or till thou thyself hadst lacked him and hadst heard of him leaving the land;
Lest thou mar thy lovely body with weeping and with woe.
But now wash thee and on thy body the clean fair raiment do,
And up to thy bower aloft with thine handmaids wend thy way,
And there to Athene, the Daughter of Zeus the Shielded, pray:
For She is the one who may save him, yea, e'en from the very death.
Nor trouble an old man's trouble, for my mind to me nowise saith
That the happy Gods are hating all this Arcesius' seed:
But there shall yet be abiding one man to hold at need
These great high-builded houses and the fat fields far from here."

So saying she lulled her wailing and stanched her eyes of the tear;
So she washed her and on her body the raiment clean she cast,

And up to her bower aloft with her handmaids then she passed,
And she set the meal in the maund, and thus to Athene she prayed:

"Hear me, O Seed of the Shielded, of Zeus, thou untamed Maid!
If ever Odysseus the Shifty within these halls hath burned
Fat thighs of ox and of sheep, thereto let thy mind be turned;
And thereof for my sake be mindful and save my son lest he die,
And ward him from these my Wooers of the evil hearts and high!"

She cried out as she spake, and the Goddess was hearkening her prayer and [her need.
But great in the shadowy hall was the din of the Wooers indeed,
And thus would one say to another of those young o'erweening men:
"This Queen of the many Wooers dights the wedding for us then,
But nought of the bane is she wotting that is fated for her son."

Thus would he say, not knowing what Fate was speeding on.
But Antinoüs took up the word and spake in their midst again:
"Now once for all, good fellows, from o'erweening words refrain,
Lest some one fetch and carry the tidings there within.
Now let us arise in silence, and the tale and device let us win
Which unto us all, we Wooers, has seemed so good and fair."

So saying, he chose out twenty of the best of those that were there.
To the ship swift-sailing they hastened, and down to the shore of the sea.
And first adown to the deeps they hauled her there to be,
While within her, the coal-black ship, the masts and the sails they set,
And into the leathern rowlocks the oars withal did they get,
And fitted all in order, and the white sails hoisted abroad.
Then the high-souled swains of service brought them their arms aboard,
And in the deep they moored her and went up one and all;

And therewith they gat them to supper and abode till night should fall.

But in her upper chamber all-wise Penelope lay,
And fasting of meat and of drink she pondered either way,
Whether her noble son should yet escape his bane,
Or whether by those Wooers the masterful he should be slain.
As amidst the thronging menfolk a lion broods o'er his fear,
Whenso all round about him they draw the ring and the snare,
In such wise did she ponder till sleep on her did fall,
And she slept as aback she lay, and her limbs slacked one and all.

But the Grey-eyed, the Goddess Athene, of other matters thought,
And an image and a seeming in the shape of a woman she wrought,
Iphthime Icarius' daughter, the high-souled; her did wed
Eumelus, who in Pheræ upheld his house and stead.
To the house of Odysseus the goodly she sped this thing away,
That Penelope's sore sorrow and heart-grief she should stay,
And might stay the weeping and wailing wherewith she made lament.
So into the sleeping-chamber by the thong of the latch it went,
And above her head did it stand and this word began to say:

"O Penelope, then thou sleepest with sorrowing heart alway?
But the Gods who live so softly will nowise have thee mourn
And weep in thine affliction; for thy son doth now return,
Since indeed against the Godfolk no trespasser is he."

But therewithal thus answered the wise Penelope
As she slept exceeding sweetly within the dreamy door:
"Why comest thou hither, my sister? since never yet before
Hast thou come here; for thou dwellest in a house far far apart.
Now thou biddest me cease from lamenting, and my weary grief of heart,

Wherewith in all unrest my mind and my soul are tossed.
But first my glorious husband, the lion-heart, have I lost,
Adorned with worth and valour o'er every Danaan man,
Whose fame was abroad in Hellas and through mid Argos ran.
And now my son belovèd in the hollow ship hath gone!
A child! who of toil or of Councils scant knowledge yet hath won.
And for him more than my husband do I sorrow, for I fear,
And sore I tremble about him, lest some evil fate he bear
Amid the folk he hath gone to, or perchance upon the sea;
For many foemen about him are devising craftily,
And are eager for his slaughter ere he come to his fatherland."

But the shadowy image answered and spake whence it did stand:
"Heart-up! nor thy mind be holding so utterly in fear;
For such a guide was with him as all men everywhere
Would crave to have beside them, and She hath might thereto.
And She is Pallas Athene, and it pitieth Her of thy woe.
And now hath She sent me hither to speak this word to thee."

But therewith spake and answered all-wise Penelope:
"Now if of God thou art, and the voice of God hast heard,
I pray thee of Him the Hapless tell me another word,
Whether he yet is living and beholding the light of the sun,
Or down in the House of Hades dwells dead with his life-days done?"

But withal the shadowy image thus answered her and said:
"I will not tell thee throughly if the man be alive or dead;
For ill it is to babble a windy tale, and vain."

Therewith by the bolt of the doorpost it drew away again,
And passed into the breath of the wind: but Icarius' daughter withal

Roused her awhile from slumber and joy on her heart did fall,
So clear was the dream that came to her when the night was deep and [dead.
But the Wooers went a-shipboard and o'er the wet ways sped,
And in their minds were they brooding for Telemachus bitter bane.

A certain island is there rock-built in the midst of the main,
Midways 'twixt the Ithacan land and Samos craggy and bare:
It is Asteris called, nor is great: but it hath an haven fair,
Two-mouthed, and those Achæans they lay a lurking there.

BOOK V.

ARGUMENT.

A COUNCIL OF THE GODS. HERMES SENT TO CALYPSO TO BID HER FURTHER THE RETURN OF ODYSSEUS. ODYSSEUS SAILS AWAY ON A RAFT. HE IS WRECKED IN THE SEA HARD ON PHÆACIA AND SWIMS ASHORE THERE.

NOW Dawn arose from her bed and the great Tithonus' side
To bear the light to the Deathless and to mortals far and wide;
But the gathered Gods were sitting, and there among the rest
Was Zeus the Lofty Thunderer, whose might is the mightiest.
There the manifold grief of Odysseus mindful Athene told,
For e'en yet was she heedful of him whom the house of the Nymph did [hold.

"Zeus, Father and happy Godfolk of the life that never dies,
Henceforth let no king mace-bearing be kind and mild and wise,
Nor let him still be minded toward meet and righteous rede,
But rather hard and cruel and bold for godless deed;
Since none of the folk remember Odysseus great and good,
Who once was king among them as a father mild of mood.
But he in an isle is abiding and bearing heavy woe
In the halls of the nymph Calypso, who will not let him go;
And nowise is he able to win to his fathers' land,
For no oar-dight ships he hath, and no fellows are to hand,
E'en such as well might speed him o'er the broad back of the main;
And now of his dear son's slaying a certain folk are fain
As his ways he wendeth homeward; for he went of his father to hear,
To Pylos exceeding goodly and to Lacedæmon the dear."

Then Zeus, the Cloud-packs' Herder, he answered her and said:
"O my child, and what a word from the wall of thy teeth hath sped,
For is not e'en this counsel of thine own devising then,
That Odysseus home returning might wreak him on these men?
But with craft Telemachus speed thou, as no might thereto dost thou lack,
That unto the land of his fathers all scathless he get him aback;
And the Wooers, home be they wending in their ship with nothing done!"

And therewith he spake unto Hermes his well-belovèd son:
"Hermes, since thou in all else hast ever our tidings to speed,
To the nymph of the hair well-woven now carry this unerring rede;
The return of Odysseus the patient, that homeward he may hie,
Though not by the Godfolks' guiding or the deed of men that die.
But many a grief enduring upon a raft well-bound
On the twentieth day shall he win him to Scheria's loamy ground,
To the land of those Phæacians who are the Gods' own kin;
And of them and their hearts such worship shall he have as a God may win,
And in a ship shall they send him to his fatherland the dear,
And shall give him gold and brass and abundant weed to wear;
So great that ne'er had Odysseus such spoil from Troy-town got
Had he come aback all scathless with his due and shared-out lot.
For so aright is it fated that his folk and his friends he behold,
And come back to his house high-buildèd and the land of his fathers of old."

So he spake, and the Slayer of Argus, the Flitter, gainsaid him nought,
But straightway unto his foot-soles he bound the shoon fair-wrought,
Deathless and never-dying: o'er the wet wave him they bear,
And over the limitless land as swift as the breath of the air.
And he took his wand wherewithal he lulleth the eyelids of men,
Of those whom he willeth, but others from slumber he rouseth again.
This then in his hand thus holding flew the mighty Argus-bane,

And over Pieria wending from the heavens sank down to the main.
Then over the billows he drave; as a fowl, as a sea-mew, was he,
Who over the terrible gulf of the all unharvested sea
Fares ever hunting the fishes, and her thick wing dips in the deep.
E'en so o'er the manifold billows his way did Hermes keep;
But when he came to the island that far and far off lay,
Then forth from the dark-blue sea-flood aland he went his way,
Till unto a mighty cavern where dwelt the Nymph did he win,
E'en she of the hair well-woven; and he found her therewithin.
On the hearth burned a mighty fire, and the savour and the scent
Of the well-cleft cedar and sandal all through the island went;
And therewithin was she singing in a voice exceeding sweet
As she traversed the loom aweaving and the web with a gold comb beat.

But all about that cavern there grew a blossoming wood,
Of alder and of poplar and of cypress savouring good;
And fowl therein wing-spreading were wont to roost and be,
For owls were there and falcons, and long-tongued crows of the sea,
And deeds of the sea they deal with and thereof they have a care.
But round the hollow cavern there spread and flourished fair
A vine of garden breeding, and in its grapes was glad;
And four wells of the white water their heads together had,
And flowing on in order four ways they thence did get;
And soft were the meadows blooming with parsley and violet.
Yea, if thither indeed had come e'en one of the Deathless, e'en he
Had wondered and gladdened his heart with all that was there to see.
And there in sooth stood wondering the Flitter, the Argus-bane.
But when o'er all these matters in his soul he had marvelled amain,
Then into the wide cave went he, and Calypso, Godhead's Grace,
Failed nowise there to know him as she looked upon his face;
For never unknown to each other are the Deathless Gods, though they

Apart from one another may be dwelling far away.
But Odysseus the mighty-hearted within he met not there,
Who on the beach sat weeping, as oft he was wont to wear
His soul with grief and groaning, and weeping; yea, and he
As the tears he was pouring downward yet gazed o'er the untilled sea.

But to Hermes spake Calypso, the Godhead's Glorious One,
And said, as aloft she was sitting on her all-bright gleaming throne:
"O God of the Wand of Gold, O Hermes dread and dear,
Why comest thou now, since aforetime thou wert not frequent here?
Tell me whereof thou art minded, for my heart would have it won
If my might thereto may avail me, and if it be doomed to be done.
But fare thou forth, for the guest-cheer for thee as now would I dight."

In such wise spake the Goddess, and spread the board aright
With meat of the Deathless before him and mingled the nectar red,
And there ate and drank the Flitter, the Bane of Argus dead.
So after that he had eaten, his soul with the meat to rejoice,
He answered the speech of the Goddess and sent forth the word of his [voice:
"Thou askest me why I am come, a God to a Goddess; so this
I will tell, yea, the whole tale truly, as forsooth my bidding is.
It was Zeus that sent me hither, and I not willing, for who
Such a wondrous space of the brine would be fain to hurry through,
And never a city of men-folk anear the road, that they
Choice gifts an hundred-folded and holy deeds might pay?
But indeed no other God the will of Zeus may transgress,
Or the rede of the Ægis-bearer may turn to emptiness.
Now he said that a man bides with thee, most hapless of the men
Who beset the city of Priam for one year short of ten;
But the tenth that town they wasted, and went on their homeward way.

But thereon against Athene they sinned and went astray,
And she raised up a blast against them and long billows of the sea,
And there all the other fellows they perished pitifully,
But him the wind and the wave bore off and wafted here.
Him then shalt thou send away ere the least of whiles shall wear,
Since for him is it nowise fated apart from his friends to die;
But the doom is, he shall behold them and at last shall draw anigh
His house the lofty-builded and the land of his fathers' race."

He spake; but shuddered Calypso, the Godhead's very Grace,
And withal she sent forth her voice and set these words on the wing:
"Hard are ye, Gods, and grudging beyond all other thing!
Us Goddesses so begrudging if we by a man be laid
In open wise, when any of a man her mate hath made;
As when She took Orion, the Rosy-fingered Day,
Just so did the Gods begrudge her, soft lives that live alway,
Till Artemis chaste, gold-thronèd, in Ortygia at the last
With her gentle shafts fell on him and slew him with their cast.
Or as when fair-haired Demeter to her mind and her mood gave way
And blent her with Iasion and in love beside him lay
In the fallow thrice ploughed over: but the deed soon came to light.
Zeus knew it, and straight he slew him with his thunder flashing white.
So now do ye grudge me, O Gods, this mortal man by my side,
Though him I saved, as lonely on the upturned keel did he ride,
When Zeus with his white-flashing thunder had broken utterly
And cleft the ship beneath him amidst the wine-dark sea:
Then the others, his goodly fellows, they perished there indeed,
But the wind and the waves they bore him and hither him did speed.
And I cherished him and fed him and said that he should be
Undying and unageing through all his days for me.
But since no other God may the will of Zeus transgress,

Or the will of the Ægis-bearer may turn to emptiness,
Let him go his ways! Since That One so biddeth him to wend
O'er the all unharvested ocean: yet him I will not send:
For here are no oar-dight ships, and no sea-folk are with me
Wherewith forthright to speed him o'er the broad back of the sea.
But heedfully will I forewarn him, and cover nothing o'er,
That all unscathed in the ending he may come to his fathers' shore."

But the Flitter, the Bane of Argus, thus answered to her there:
"Yea, e'en so shalt thou speed him, and of Zeus and his anger beware,
Lest wroth, with thee full hardly he deal in other days."

So the mighty Bane of Argus spake the word and went his ways;
But unto the great-heart Odysseus the glorious damsel hied,
When the word of Zeus she had hearkened and heard how all should betide.
And she found him there asitting on the beach, and ever aswim
Were his eyes with tears and weeping, and the sweet life ebbed from him
As his lost return he lamented. But he had no joy of the May,
Although perforce in the night-tide by the side of her he lay
In the hollow den of the rocks, he loth, though fain were she.
But by day on the rocks was he sitting and down by the shore of the sea,
And with grief he wore his soul and with tears, and many a moan,
As he gazed o'er the untilled sea-flood and let the tears fall down.

So the Godhead's Glory drew near him and spake as she stood anear:
"O hapless, no longer be wailing and the life within thee wear;
For now indeed with goodwill will I bring thy departure to pass.
Fall to now, the long beams be hewing, and shape thee a raft with the brass
Full wide, and withal the deck-beams aloft thereunto fit,
That over the darkling sea-flood to thy land it thee may flit.
But bread and water, and wine the ruddy therein will I lay,

E'en such as thy soul desires, that thou stave thy hunger away.
And with raiment will I clothe thee, and a following wind will I send,
That all unscathed of evil to thy fatherland thou may'st wend.
For the Gods that hold the heavens wide-spread will have it so;
And forsooth they are mightier than I to devise the deed and to do."

But thereat the goodly Odysseus, toil-stout, fell shuddering,
And his voice withal he lifted and set these words on the wing:
"Far other things than my going, O Goddess, thou willest for me,
When thou biddest me fare in a raft o'er the mighty gulf of the sea,
The perilous place and dreadful, where a way is scarce to be had
With a shapely ship swift-sailing, with the wind of Zeus made glad:
Against thy will, O Goddess, on the raft will I nowise fare,
But and if thou hast the heart with a mighty oath to swear
That no other baleful trouble thou willest on me to fall."

He spake, and the Godhead's Glory, Calypso, smiled withal,
And she stroked him down with her hand and named him, and spake for [her part:
"Yea, verily art thou cunning and no scant-of-wit thou art,
That in thy mind thou hast compassed to speak such a word as this.
Now hereof may the Earth bear witness, and the Heaven aloft that is!
And Styx, the downlong water! (and this of every oath
Is the mightiest and most fearful for the blessed Gods forsooth)
That no other baleful trouble do I will and devise for thee,
But all this that I plan and think of is even such as for me
Myself would be devising, were I in such-like need;
For the soul within me is righteous, nor yet in my breast indeed
Is my spirit iron-fashioned, but compassionate am I."

So spake the Grace of the Godhead, and led on speedily,

And he followed on her footsteps and his way behind her wan
Till they came to the rock-den's hollow, the Goddess and the man,
And there he sat him adown on the throne and the lofty seat
Whence Hermes had arisen; and she set out diverse meat,
All things to eat and to drink that are food for mortal men,
And over against Odysseus the goodly she set her then,
And the meat and the drink of the Deathless the handmaids set for her.
So they stretched out their hands to the meat that lay before them there.

But when of meat and of drink desire was fully fed,
Then Calypso, Godhead's Glory, took up the word and said:
"O Zeus-born son of Laertes, Odysseus, full of guile,
And art thou then utterly minded to get thee home this while
To thy fatherland belovèd? Then go, and fare thee well!
But if the soul within thee the tale could truly tell
Of the woes for thy fulfilling ere thou come to thy fatherland,
Then here with me abiding as the guard of this house wouldst thou stand,
A deathless man: though the sight of thy wife thou longest for,
Since her indeed thou desirest each day and evermore.
Although forsooth I deem me in nowise worser than she
In comeliness and stature, and meet may it never be
For the deathful with the Deathless in body and shape to contend."

Therewith all-wise Odysseus this answer forth did send:
"Be not wroth herewith, great Goddess, for I know full certainly
That lacking in all beside thee is the wise Penelope,
Both in comeliness and stature and in all wise to behold;
For she is of men that perish, and thou deathless and waxing not old.
Nevertheless e'en so all days daylong do I yearn
To get me back again homeward and to see my day of return.
But if some God should wreck me as I wend o'er the wine-dark deep

I will bear it, for in my breast an enduring heart I keep.
Many woes and toil abundant in the war, on the wave of the sea,
Have I suffered and done already; and of these let this one be."

So he spake, and the sun sank under, and the dark drew on apace;
And they gat them away together in a nook of the hollow place,
And fulfilled their love and their longing as each by each they lay.

But when shone the Mother of Morning, Rose-fingered Early Day,
His cloak and his kirtle on him Odysseus did forthright,
And the Nymph did on a garment full wide and silver-white
Of a lovely web and lightsome; and round her loins she did
A goodly golden girdle, and her head with the veil she hid.
Then for great-souled Odysseus she devised his leaving the land.
A mighty axe she gave him, made meet for the palm of his hand,
Brazen, on both sides whetted; and hefted was the head
With a full fair helve of olive firm fitted in its stead.
Then she gave him an adze well polished, and led the way along
To the utmost end of the island, where the trees grew tall and strong,
The alder and the poplar and the heaven-upreaching pine,
Well-seasoned, dry, and ancient, and light to swim the brine.
But when the place she had shown him where long the tree-boles grew
Then Calypso, Godhead's Glory, aback to her homestead drew;
And therewith he hewed the timber, and swift the work he won,
And of trees he felled him twenty, and the brass axe laid thereon,
And planed them with all cunning, and the rule along them laid.
Till Calypso, Godhead's Glory, the wimbles brought to aid,
And then all the beams did he bore, and each to each did fit,
And so with mortice and treenail each beam he mated it.
And as wide as a man well skilled in the woodwright's art would trace
The hold of a ship that beareth a freight from place to place,

So wide was Odysseus making his roomy raft to be.
Then withal to the serried ribs the deck-beams craftily
He fitted; and finished all with the long planks of the side.
But therein he stepped a mast, with a yard across it to ride;
And he wrought thereto a rudder that a straight road he might steer;
And with wicker bulwarks fenced it about and everywhere,
To ward off the wash of the billows, and heaped wood for ballasting.
Then Calypso, Godhead's Glory, a web thereto did she bring
To fashion him sails, and this also in goodly wise did he do,
And braces therewith and halyards and sheets he wrought thereto.
And then to the holy salt sea with handspikes he hove her adown.

And now by the fourth day's ending the work was throughly won,
And the fifth day fair Calypso from the isle the man did speed
When she had washed his body and clad him in fragrant weed.
And two skins in the raft laid the Goddess: of black wine was the one,
And the other, the great one, of water; and victual had she done
In a wallet, yea, many dainties to his uttermost content;
And a fair wind nothing troublous, and soft and warm, she sent.

Glad then was the goodly Odysseus as he set his sail to the wind,
And sitting down by the tiller steered on with heedful mind.
Nor yet did any slumber on his eyelids lay its weight
As he gazed upon the Pleiads and Boötes setting late,
And the Bear, which some moreover by the name of the Wain they call,
And on himself he turneth and watcheth Orion withal;
And he alone in the washing of ocean hath no share.

Now Calypso, Godhead's Glory, had so bidden him to steer
And wend his ways o'er the sea-flood on the left hand still to be;
So for seven days' space and ten he went his ways o'er the sea,

But on the eighteenth day, lo the shadowy mountains there
Of the land of the Phæacians where nighest to him they were,
And even as a war-shield on the darkling deep it showed.

But the Lord, the Shaker of Earth, from the Æthiopians' abode,
As he came, beheld him afar from the hills of the Solymi, [rose high,
As he showed there a-sailing the sea-flood. Then the wrath in his soul
And, wagging his head, withal such words to his soul did he speed:
"Out on it! now have the Gods on Odysseus shifted their rede,
Since amid the Æthiopians awhile agone I was,
And he neareth the land of Phæacia, where to him shall it come to pass
To escape the goal of his sorrows that so sore on him do prevail.
And yet meseems shall I drive him towards full enough of bale."

He spake, and the clouds he gathered, and troubled the deeps of the sea,
His hand the tri-spear grasping; and he stirred up all blasts that may be
Of every airt of the winds, and he covered up with the drift
The earth and the sea together, and night fell down from the lift.
Then the East and the South together, and the hard-breathed West did
And the North aloft-engendered rolled huge the billowy wash. [clash,

Ah! then the knees of Odysseus fell slack, and his dear heart failed,
And into his soul the mighty he spake in words that wailed:
"O me! O me unhappy! what now shall be the end?
O'er-true meseems the Goddess that word to me did send,
When she said that on the sea-flood, ere I came to my father's land,
I should fill up the measure of woes; and all is now at hand.
Ah! with what mighty cloud-rack Zeus piles the stretch of sky,
And troubleth all the sea-flood, and the blasts go hurrying by
Of every airt of the winds: now sure is the bitter bane.
O threefold, fourfold happy, ye Danaans, of your gain

Of death by Troy wide-spreading! when for Atreus' son ye wrought,
O would that I had perished and bane upon me brought
In the day when the thronging Trojans their brazen spears cast on,
When about the son of Peleus, the dead man, war we won!
E'en so had I gotten my burial, and my fame the Achæans had spread,
But now unto me is it fated in a pitiful wise to be dead."

And e'en as the word was spoken came a mighty toppling wave,
And fiercely tumbling upon him the shuddering craft it drave,
And the tiller was torn from his hand-grip, and therewithal was he cast
Afar from the raft, and moreover amidmost brake the mast
As a squall of the blended whirlwind fell on it fearfully,
And the sail withal and the yard-arm fell far amidst the sea.

Long while was he holden under, nor yet had he the might
Against the rush of the billow to heave him up forthright,
For heavily hung the raiment of Calypso the divine.
But at last and at length he came up, and spat out the bitter brine,
Which from his head moreover ran down abundantly.
But the raft he forgat in nowise though sore outworn was he,
And thereat he dashed through the billows and gat a hold of her,
And sat him down amidships and shunned the death anear:
But that craft the mighty billows drave here and there on the tide;
As when the autumn northwind o'er the plain is driving wide
The thistledown, and huddled there clingeth bur to bur,
So here and there o'er the sea-flood the wild wind shuttled her,
And whiles the South would give her to be borne by the North wind strong,
And whiles the East to the West would cast her to hurry along.

All this saw Cadmus' daughter, Ino, fair-ancled maid,
Leucothea hight, who erewhile the speech of mortals said,

But now in the salt-sea dwelling in the glory of Gods had share.
Now she pitied Odysseus bewildered, all the burden of griefs he must bear.
So now in the shape of a sea-mew she arose from the deep of the sea,
And sat on the raft hard-bounden, and therewith a word spake she:
"Hapless! why then is Poseidon, the Shaker of the Earth,
So utterly wroth against thee and such evil bringeth to birth?
Yet neither so shall he slay thee though he be fain of it.
Now therefore thuswise do thou, since thou seem'st no scant-of-wit,
Do from thee these thy garments, leave the raft for the wind to bear,
And with thy hands be rowing, and strive to draw anear
The land of the Phæacians, where escape to thee shall hap,
And this my veil undying about thy body wrap.
Then nought need'st thou dread of evil or any death at hand.
But when at last with thy hand-grip thou hast taken hold of the land,
Then do it off thee and cast it away to the wine-dark deep
Afar from the land, and turn thee about and thine own way keep."

So spake the Goddess, and therewith the head-gear to him gave,
And again went under the sea-flood, uptossed with many a wave,
In the likeness of a sea-mew; and the black wave hid her again.

But the toil-stout goodly Odysseus he pondered his thought atwain,
And unto his mighty soul he spake in heavy wise:
"Woe's me! some one of the Deathless against me the guile doth devise
Once more, since thus she biddeth from the raft to get me away.
But nowise will I obey her, since mine eyes saw where it lay
Far off, that land that she told of as my refuge from the sea.
Nay rather this will I do, and the best it seemeth to me;
As long as the timbers hold, and the joints are together still,
So long will I abide here, and bear what cometh of ill:
But when the seas have shaken the raft to pieces at last

Therewith will I fall to my swimming; for no better may I forecast."

But while to his mind and his mood such thoughts as this he gave,
Poseidon, the Shaker of Earth, thrust on a mighty wave,
Rough, perilous, toppling aloft, and on him drave adown.
As it haps with a heap of chaff when the fresh wind falleth on
And tosseth it up, and scattereth the dry stuff every road,
So now were the long beams scattered: but Odysseus yet bestrode
One beam, and drave it onward as one that a horse doth bear;
And he did from off him the raiment, the gift of Calypso the fair,
And the veil of the Goddess withal he wrapped round the breast of him
And cast himself prone on the sea-flood, and strove and fell to swim,
Stretching out either hand; but the Lord, the Shaker of Earth,
Beheld him, and wagging his head, bespake his soul in his mirth:
"Yea, thou with thy load of evil, go wandering over the sea,
Until of the men Zeus-cherished a fellow thou shalt be.
Yet not e'en so to my deeming shalt thou hold thy troubles light."

So he spake, and his fair-maned horses with the whip withal did he smite:
And came his ways to Ægæ, where his glorious house is wrought.

But the Damsel, the Daughter of Zeus, of other things had thought;
For now of the rest of the winds a bond on their goings she laid,
And caused them to cease from blowing, and to slumber and sleep she bade.
But she egged on the eager North, and brake down the seas before,
Until the Zeus-bred Odysseus, with the lovers of the oar,
The Phæacian folk, might mingle, and safe from bane might be.

Two days and nights thenceforward did he drift on the swell of the sea,
And many things of his deathday did he in his heart forecast;
But when the fair-haired Dawning the third day made at last

All dead the gale was fallen, and all was calm and clear,
And no breath of air was about; then he saw the land anear,
As he looked forth very sharply upraised on a swelling sea:
And as dear as the life of a father to his children seemeth to be,
Who in sickness hath been lying and wasting away for long,
And suffering grievous torment, and worn by the God of wrong;
But now the Gods release him, and his life is dear and good—
E'en so dear unto Odysseus was the sight of land and wood;
And he swam on stoutly, striving to tread the earth once more.
But when at last he was gotten within shouting space of the shore,
Then indeed he heard the thundering of the surf on the reefs of the sea.
For flung forth on the rocks of the mainland the swell roared dreadfully,
And all things there were weltering in the salt-sea wave and the foam,
And therein was no haven for ships and no wind-free harbouring home,
But crags and jutting nesses and reefs by the sea washed o'er.
Then loosened the knees of Odysseus, and his dear heart failed him sore,
And midst his woe was he saying to his mighty heart and bold:

"O me! now that Zeus hath granted the unhoped-for land to behold,
And that cleaving my way I have won o'er so great a gulf of the sea,
From out of the hoary water no door there seemeth for me,
For sharp upriseth the crag-wall, and about it everywhere
Are the broken billows roaring, and the rocks rise smooth and sheer
Right up from the deep of the sea; and no place for my feet to stand
Is anywhere there to be come at to escape from the evil at hand.
For if I come forth from the sea-flood by the billow shall I be caught
And flung up 'gainst the stony rocks, and my deed shall come to nought;
And if I swim along coasting and seek if yet there be
Some downward-sloping foreshore or some haven of the sea,
O then I fear lest the stormwind should catch me up once more
And over the fishy sea should drive me moaning sore.

Or against me the God, the Mighty, may send some whale of the deep,
Of the many that Amphitrite the great doth cherish and keep.
For I wot of the wrath against me of the mighty Shaker of Earth."

But while in his mind and his mood such words as this had birth
A mighty billow bore him 'gainst the rugged ness of stone,
And there had his skin been stripped and broken every bone,
But the Goddess, the Grey-eyed Athene, in his mind she set a thought,
And stark with both hands straining the rock therewith he caught,
And held on groaning aloud till the mighty wave had gone by.
But when he had thus escaped it, the back-draft mightily
Fell on him, and bore against him and drave him out to sea.
As when from the place of his dwelling a cuttle-fish dragged shall be,
And about the creature's suckers cling the pebbles many an one,
So now from the mighty hands of the man by the stress of the stone
Was the skin stripped off, and his body did the swelling billow hide.
And there the hapless Odysseus in the teeth of doom had died
If the Goddess, the Grey-eyed Athene, had not taught him to understand.
So, coming up from the billows that were hurled against the land,
Coasting he swam, looking forth to the land if yet there might be
Some downward-sloping foreshore or some haven of the sea.
And lo, at the last to the mouth of a river flowing fair
He came as he swam, and he looked for the place that was likeliest there,
Smooth from all rocks, and a shelter against the blast of the wind.
And he felt the stream against him and in such wise prayed in his mind:

"Hear me, O King, whosoever thou art! to thee much beprayed
I come from the sea-flood fleeing and the threats that Poseidon hath made;
And e'en to the Gods that die not 'tis a matter for pity indeed
When a man bewildered cometh, as I come now in my need,
To thy stream, and unto thy knees with the burden of trouble on me.

Now pity me therefore, O King, for thy bedesman I boast me to be."

Then the God his tide held backward, and therewith laid the wave,
And sent a calm before him, and the man aland did he save
By the going out of the river. But weak was either knee,
And weak were his mighty hands, for his soul was worn by the sea,
And all his flesh was swollen, and the plenteous salt sea ran
From his mouth and from his nostrils: a breathless, voiceless man
He lay there fainting, and on him the weariness weighed downright.
But when he was breathed again, and his soul had gotten her might,
Therewith the Goddess' headgear he loosed away from him,
And into the sea-flowing river he cast it forth to swim,
And a great wave bore it away down the tide, and Ino fair [and there,
Caught it up in her dear hands straightway; but he turned from the river,
He laid him adown on the rushes and kissed the corn-kind earth,
And in grief these words was he speaking to his soul, the mighty of worth:

"Woe's me for my weary trouble! What now shall be last to betide?
For if indeed by the river through the weary night I abide,
Then the bitter evil rime and the fresh dew of the night
Shall overcome my spirit all worsened with lack of might, [nigh.
For cold blows the wind from the river when the time of the dawning is
But if I climb to the bent, and the shady wood on high,
And abide in the bushy thicket, then, though it well may be
That the cold and the weariness pass and the sweet sleep come to me,
Yet I fear that unto the beasts I become but a spoil and a prey."

But unto him turning it over the last seemed the better way
And toward the wood he wended: to the water somewhat anear
In the midst of a glade he found it; and two trees were waxing there
From one and the selfsame root, a wild olive and a tame,

And no blast of the wet-blowing wind through the midst of them ever came,
And never the Sun, the gleaming, shot through them with his ray,
Nor the shower soaked all through them, so exceeding thick were they
With their boughs grown interlacing. There Odysseus laid him adown,
But first with his very hands a wide bed had he strown,
For great plenty of fallen leaves lay underneath the tree,
Yea, fully enough to cover two men, or mayhappen three
In the season of the winter how hard soever it were.
E'en these he beheld and gathered, Odysseus mighty to bear, [high:
And he lay down there in the midmost and the leaves heaped over him
E'en as when 'neath the blackened embers one thrusteth a brand to lie
At the acres' uttermost ending, where no neighbours are anear,
To save the seed of fire nor seek kindling otherwhere.
So hid by the leaves was Odysseus, and therewith over his eyes
The sleep was Athene shedding, that in the speediest wise
Might end his weary trouble: so she closed his eyelids dear.

BOOK VI.

ARGUMENT.

ODYSSEUS IS AWAKENED BY NAUSICAÄ, THE DAUGHTER OF ALCINOÜS, KING OF THE PHÆACIANS, AND BY HER IS BROUGHT TO THE CITY AND THE PALACE OF HER FATHER.

THUSWISE the goodly Odysseus, the toil-stout, slumbered there,
By sleep and weariness laden; but therewith did Athene fare
To the folk of those Phæacians and the burg where they abide:
Who dwelt in days passed over by Hypereia the wide,
Anigh unto the Cyclops of the haughty minds and high,
Who were wont with war to waste them; for they had the mastery.
Till Nausithoüs the godlike stirred them, and brought them then
To the sure abode of Scheria, far from gain-pursuing men.
And he drew a wall round the city, and the houses he upreared,
And the shrines of the Gods he fashioned, and the fruitful acres shared;
But when by doom he was vanquished, and to Hades went to dwell,
In his stead was Alcinoüs ruling with god-craft furnished well.

To the house of him did Athene, the Goddess, the Grey-eyed, wend,
For Odysseus the mighty-hearted devising his wandering's end;
And she came to the fair-wrought chamber where asleep was a damsel laid
Who no worser of her body than the Deathless Ones was made,
E'en Nausicaä, the daughter of Alcinoüs great of heart;
And two handmaids, to whose fairness gave the Graces share and part,
Were on either side of the door-posts, and shut was the shining door.
But she as the night-wind's breathing towards the maiden's bedside bore,

And above her head was she standing as she uttered forth the word
In the likeness of the daughter of Dymas, ship-famed lord,
Of like age with the damsel, and unto her heart full dear.
In her shape Grey-eyed Athene thus spake to the damsel there.

"Nausicaä, how did thy mother so heedless thee beget?
Whereas the gleaming raiment lies all unheeded yet,
And near at hand is thy wedding, when both thou fair dight shouldst be,
And shouldst give withal to the others, yea those that marry thee.
For hereby shall a good report among menfolk fare forth,
And therein shall thy father rejoice, and thy mother of worship and worth.
So let us fare forth to the washing with the first of the dawn of the day,
And I will go with thee a helping, that all this ye may swiftly array.
For now but a little longer shall endure thy maidenhood,
Since amidst this folk and city by the mightiest art thou wooed,
The chiefs of the folk Phæacian, the race whence thou wert born.
Pray then thy noble father in the early tide of morn,
To set forth for thee the yoke-mules, and the wain to bear aright
All those the gowns and the girdles and the mantles glittering bright,
And thyself withal, for far fairer it is such wise to wend
Than afoot; for the washing-places are far from the township's end."

She spake, and forth to Olympus Grey-eyed Athene passed,
Where men say is the House of the Godfolk for ever firm and fast;
And by no wind is it shaken, nor wet by the rainy drift,
Nor the snow comes ever anigh it; but the utter cloudless lift
Is spread o'er all, and white splendour runs through it everywhere;
And therein the Gods, the Happy, all days in gladness wear.
Thereto departed the Grey-eyed, having taught the may with a word.

Now come was the Fair-throned Morning, and the maid to waking stirred

Nausicaä the well-clad, who fell to wondering
Of her dream, and went through the houses to tell them of the thing,
Her father dear and her mother: and them within she found;
On the hearth was her mother sitting with her handmaids all around
Twining the yarn sea-purpled: but in the doorway there
She met her father minded for the famous kings and fair
And the Council, thither summoned by the great Phæacian folk.
So she stood by her father belovèd, and these words to him she spoke:

"Dear father, will ye not dight me a wain well-wheeled and high,
That those my goodly garments that befouled about me lie,
I may have away to the washing amidst the river's flow?
For both thou thyself it befitteth, when thou with the chiefs dost go,
Areding the redes, that thou carry fresh raiment on thy skin.
And five sons moreover hast thou these halls that were born within,
And two thereof are wedded, but three swains in the spring of youth;
And ever will they be having new-washen weed forsooth
When unto the dance they wend them: of all which hath my mind the [care."

So spake she, shamefaced to name it unto her father dear,
Her freshly growing wedding; but he knew it all and spake:
"My child, no mules I grudge thee, nor aught else that thou wouldst take.
Go then, and the serving-people the wain for thee shall array,
Full high, all tilted over and well-wheeled for the way."

He spake and the thralls commanded, and they his bidding wrought,
And there without the mule-wain light running forth they brought,
And dight it, and the yoke-mules beneath the yokes did lead.
Then the damsel from the chamber brought down the seemly weed,
And laid all that together within the well-smoothed wain;
And in a chest laid her mother meat good for the body's gain:

Meats diverse, yea and dainties; and wine in a bottle of skin
She poured withal, and the damsel laid all the wain within.
And wet oil in a cruse all golden she gave unto her there,
That she and her handmaidens might sleek them well and fair.
Then the damsel took up the mule-whip, and hand to the bright reins laid,
And smote the mules to be going, and the mules much clatter made
As they strained and stretched unflagging with the raiment and the may;
Nor her alone, for with her went the handmaids on the way.

So when they were come to the river and its streams exceeding fair,
Where were washing-wells unfailing, and the lovely water there
Welled up exceeding plenteous to cleanse all grime and stain,
Then therewithal the yoke-mules they loose from under the wain,
And there along they drive them by the eddying river's drift,
To browse the grass sweet-waxing; and lay hands to the wain, and lift
The raiment thence, and bear it adown to the water black
And tread it in the trenches, and the strife is nowise slack.
So, having washed it and cleansed it of the dirt-stains all and each,
They lay it out in order along the salt-sea beach,
Where the pebbles are the cleanest by the sea-wash on the shore.
Then they bathe and with smooth olive they sleek their bodies o'er,
And then they take their dinner adown by the river side,
While for their garments' drying in the sunbeams they abide.
But when the maid and her maidens of the meat had had their will,
Then there they do off their head-gear, and get to the ball-play's skill,
And Nausicaä the white-armed amidst them raised the song.
And e'en as Artemis fareth shaft-fain the ridges along,
O'er Erymanthus' side or Taygetus measureless high,
Full fain of the chase of the boar, and the hart swift-footed to fly,
And the Daughters of Zeus the Shielded, the Woodland Women, play
All round about and about her, and glad is Leto that day;

And she by the head and the frontal o'ertops them every one,
And all are fair and lovely, but she wendeth her easily known,—
E'en so the maid unwedded her maidens all outwent.

But when for the road she was ready and on home again intent,
Having yoked the mules to the waggon and folded the raiment fair,
Then the Goddess, the Grey-eyed Athene, of other things had care,
That Odysseus might awaken and behold the fair-faced may
Who to the Burg Phæacian should lead him on the way.
So unto one of her handmaids the Queen-maid cast the ball,
And she missed it, and into the eddy and the deep of the stream did it fall,
And far went their crying aloud, and the goodly Odysseus awoke,
And he sat up and fell pondering, and two ways his pondering took.

"O me, in what land of menfolk, of mortals am I beguiled?
Are they men unrighteous-minded and fierce and woodland wild?
Or are they men guest-kindly and God-fearing men of mood?
For a fresh cry round me ringeth of the damsels of the wood,
The maids that hold the mountains and the heathlands high aloft,
And the wells of the flowing river and the marshlands grassy soft.
But meseemeth unto menfolk speech-wont am I come anigh,
So now for myself will I see it and myself the matter try."

Forth then from under the bushes came Odysseus as he spake,
And a leafy bough of the thicket with his heavy hand he brake,
His man's unseemly members to cover up from sight.
So he went as a fell-bred lion that trusteth in his might
As he goes through the wind and the rain-drift, and his eyes they gleam
As after the neat he goeth and forth for the sheep doth fare, [and glare
And after the wild-deer wendeth; for his belly biddeth him on
To try for the flock, and betake him to the garth well-builded and done.

E'en so did Odysseus betake him, for as naked as he were
To consort with the well-tressed damsels, now need was come so near.
And he seemed to them but dreadful, befouled with the brine all o'er,
And they fled scared hither and thither about the bays of the shore.
But alone stood Alcinoüs' daughter, for Athene made her bold
Of her heart, and from her body all trembling did withhold;
So she stood in her place to meet him, and he pondered diversely
Whether he should pray to the fair-faced, laying hand upon her knee,
Or aloof from where he was standing with soothing speech to pray
That she would give him a garment and tell of the townward way.
And so to him bethinking at last it seemed but good
With soothing words to beseech her aloof from where he stood,
Lest the maid should be wrathful of heart if his hand her knees should [take.
So soothing words and gainful thenceforth withal he spake:

"O Queen, to thy knees I betake me, be'est thou God or of mortal race,
But if thou art of the Godfolk who hold the heavenly space,
Then in form and stature and breeding I may liken thee to none
Save Artemis, the Daughter of Zeus the Mighty One.
But if thou art of menfolk and the dwellers of the earth,
Thrice blessed then thy father, and the Queen that gave thee birth!
And thrice blessed are thy brethren! for their souls full certainly
With joy and gladness ever are fain because of thee,
When they look on thee entering the dance, such a fair and blossoming [bough;
But yet of all men of menfolk is his heart the happiest now
Who with many gifts hath prevailed to lead thee home and away.
For none such of men that are mortal have my eyes beheld on a day,
Neither of men nor of women: awe holds me looking on thee.
At Delos, indeed, on a day a sight e'en so dear did I see,
A fig-sapling waxing aloft by Apollo's altar-stone.
For indeed I was faring thither, and much people followed me on

By the road that was fated to bring me to labour and many an ill.
E'en so when that sight I beheld long did wonder my spirit fulfil,
Since never as yet had I seen from the earth such a tree-bole upspring.
And in such wise at thee do I wonder and glory, and tremble to cling
To thy knees: though most heavy, O maiden, the trouble on me hath
Yestreen, on the twentieth day from the wine-dark sea I fled. [been sped,
For so long had the billows borne me, and the storm-blast driven me on,
From the island of Ogygia, till the God here cast me adown,
That yet more of ill I may suffer e'en here: for thereof I see
No end; but many a trouble will the Gods bring ere that be.
But pity me, Queen; for to thee, having suffered many a woe,
Do I come the first; and none other of all the men I know
Of those who hold this city and dwell on this earth and ground.
Then show me the burg, and give me a rag to wrap me around;
For with some wrap of the linen perchance thou camest here.
And so may the high Gods give thee whatso thine heart holds dear,
A husband and a homestead, and concord whole and sound.
For nothing sure more goodly or better may be found
Than man and woman holding one house with one goodwill.
Thus many a grief are they giving to those that wish them ill,
But great joy to their well-willers; and they wot it best of all."

But Nausicaä the white-armed, she answered him withal:
"O guest, forsooth thou seemest no fool, and no man of ill.
But Zeus the Olympian giveth to menfolk after his will,
To each, be he good, be he evil, his share of the happy day;
And these things shall be of his giving; so bear it as ye may.
But since to our land and our city thou hast come thus wandering,
Thou shalt neither lack for raiment nor any other thing [place.
That is meet for a toil-worn suppliant who hath happed on our dwelling-
Now the city will I show thee, and will name our folk and our race:

For it is the Folk Phæacian this burg and land that hold,
And I am Alcinoüs' daughter, the great-heart king, the bold;
And of him indeed it cometh what might Phæacians have."

She spake, and unto her handmaids well-tressed the bidding gave:
"Stay now I bid ye, handmaids! from a man's sight flee ye so?
Perchance then ye are thinking that he cometh hither a foe.
But no mortal man is living, nor shall ever come to birth,
Who shall fare to the folk Phæacian, and this people of the earth,
With war in hand: for the Deathless hold us exceeding dear;
For amid the sea-waves' clashing aloof are we dwelling here,
The outermost of menfolk, with no other mortals blent.
But this man, a hapless wanderer, to usward now is sent,
And him is it meet to cherish; since from Zeus come guestfolk all
And suppliants; and full welcome is the gift, albeit but small.
So unto our guest, O handmaids, give meat and drink enow,
And bathe him in the river where never a blast may blow."

So spake she; and they stayed them and called out, maid to maid;
And Odysseus into a shelter they brought as the damsel bade,
Nausicaä, the daughter of Alcinoüs, heart of pride;
And raiment withal, a kirtle and a cloak, they set by his side,
And in a cruse all golden wet oil to him they gave,
And bade him wash him straightway in the running river's wave.

But therewith unto the handmaids goodly Odysseus spake:
"Stand off I bid you, damsels, while the work in hand I take,
And wash the brine from my shoulders, and sleek them all around.
Since verily now this long while sweet oil they have not found.
But before you nought will I wash me, for shame I have indeed,
Amidst of fair-tressed damsels to be all bare of weed."

So he spake and aloof they gat them, and thereof they told the may,
But Odysseus with the river from his body washed away
The brine from his back and his shoulders wrought broad and mightily,
And from his head was he wiping the foam of the untilled sea;
But when he had throughly washed him, and the oil about him had shed,
He did upon him the raiment the gift of the maid unwed.
But Athene, Zeus-begotten, dealt with him in such wise
That bigger yet was his seeming, and mightier to all eyes,
With the hair on his head crisp curling as the bloom of the daffodil.
And as when the silver with gold is o'erlaid by a man of skill,
Yea, a craftsman whom Hephæstus and Pallas Athene have taught
To be master over masters, and lovely work he hath wrought;
So she round his head and his shoulders shed grace abundantly.

But he went aloof thereafter and sat down by the side of the sea,
In glory and grace fair gleaming, and at him much marvelled the maid;
And therewithal to her damsels fair-tressed she answered and said:
"Now hearken, all ye damsels white-armed, till my word is told!
By no means against the willing of all Gods that Olympus hold
Among the godlike Phæacians is this man come to be.
Forsooth e'en now uncomely was he seeming unto me;
But now is he like to the Godfolk who hold the heavens wide.
Might but such be called my husband and ever here to abide!
And O that it might please him to dwell within our land!
But now for the guest, O handmaids, bring meat and drink to hand."

She spake and they heard, and straightway her bidding they obeyed,
And so before Odysseus the meat and the drink they laid:
And the toil-stout goodly Odysseus fell to full eagerly
On the meat and the drink: for this long while fasting of all was he.
But Nausicaä the white-armed heeded other matters yet,

For the garments all she folded and within the fair wain set,
And the strong-hoofed mules she yoked and gat her up on the wain,
And she heartened up Odysseus, and hailed him and spake again:

"Up, guest, and get thee townward, that thee I hence may flit
To the house of my wise-heart father: and there I do thee to wit
Thou shalt hap upon Phæacians, all the noblest that there be.
But now shalt thou do in thuswise: for no fool thou seemest to be.
The while we wend through the meadows and the tillage wrought of men,
Along with these my handmaids do thou get thee speedily then,
Beside the wain and the yoke-mules, and the way will I lead for all.
But when we come up to the city, around it goeth a wall
High-towered, and each side of the burg there lieth a haven fair,
Strait-mouthed; and the curving ships on the road are drawn up there;
For all men there have a ship-stead, to each keel his meeted ground.
There too is their place of assembly, Poseidon's house around,
And with dragged-on stones is it furnished, in earth embedded deep:
And there the black ships' tackling they care for and they keep,
As the sails thereof and the cables; and the oars are shaven there.
For of neither bow nor quiver Phæacian men have care,
But of masts and keel and oar-bank, and the shapely ships wherein
They have all joy and pleasure o'er the grey sea way to win.
Now the hard word of these would I shun lest they cast a blame on me,
For some among the people most overbearing be;
And perchance one of these of the worser might come across me and say:
'This stranger so great and so goodly, that Nausicaä leads by the way,
Where then will she have found him, her very lord to be?
From her ship then will she have taken some wanderer over the sea
Of the men that aloof are living, for none such dwell anear;
Or else some God prayer-wearied hath come down for her prayer
From the heavens aloft, and henceforward he shall have her all her days.

Yea better elsewhere that she wed her as she cometh and goeth her ways.
For ever will she be scorning us Phæacian men indeed,
Though many amidst the people were her wooers good at need.'
In such wise would they be speaking, and thence shame to me should grow,
And with her should I be angry that suchlike things should do,
And against the will of her father and mother alive and dear,
Should mix and mingle with menfolk ere her open wedding were.
But, O guest, do thou hearken my word, that as swiftly as may be
Thou may'st find of my father speeding to thy land across the sea.
A glorious grove of Athene shalt thou find, the way beside,
Of poplars, wherein is a well, and about it a meadow wide:
And there is the garth of my father and his garden growing fair,
E'en just so far from the city as a shouting man ye may hear,
There sit thee down and abide a while of time, till we come
Amidst of the very city and reach my father's home.
But when thou deemest us gotten unto that house of his,
Then go to the burg Phæacian, and ask of where it is,
The homestead of Alcinoüs my father great and glad.
But right easy is it to wot of, and forsooth a little lad
Would show it thee: for the others of Phæacian folk in nought
Are builded there and fashioned as the hero's house is wrought.
But when the house and the forecourt have hid thee from the street,
Go swiftly through to the chamber, and my mother there shall ye meet:
On the hearth thereof she sitteth and twines in the firelight
The yarn of the sea-born purple, a wonder to the sight.
'Gainst a pillar is she leaning, and her handmaids sit behind,
And withal the chair of my father touching hers ye there shall find,
Where e'en as a God undying he sitteth and drinketh the wine.
But pass him by, and straightway on the knees of that mother mine
Lay hand, that in speedy fashion and in joy of heart ye may see
The day of your returning, for as far off as ye be.

For if she be well-willing and her heart of thee be fain,
Then good hope may'st thou cherish to look on thy friends again,
And come back to the land of thy fathers and thine house well builded and [strong."
She spake the word, and the yoke-mules she smote with the shining thong,
And they left the streams of the river right soon, and fared full fleet,
And well on the way were they running, and speedily ambled their feet.
But she drave the waggon wisely that on foot they might follow anigh,
Odysseus and the handmaids, and the thong plied craftily.

So set the sun, and they gat them to the grove of great renown,
The holy place of Athene; and there sat Odysseus adown,
And unto the Daughter of Zeus, the Almighty, he fell to pray:
"Hearken, O child of the Shielded, Zeus-born, unvanquished May!
Yea, now indeed may'st thou hear me since before thou heardest me not,
When the great Earth-shaker smote me and wrack and ruin I got.
Now give me to reach these Phæacians a man well pitied and dear!"

So he prayed; and Pallas Athene she hearkened to his prayer,
But showed not there before him; for somewhat dreaded she
The wrath of her father's brother: who was wroth vehemently
Against the Godlike Odysseus till within his land he were.

BOOK VII.

ARGUMENT.

ODYSSEUS COMES TO THE PHÆACIAN CITY AND THE HOUSE OF ALCINOÜS, WHERE HE IS RECEIVED AS A SUPPLIANT AND GUEST, AND ALCINOÜS PROMISES TO FURTHER HIM ON HIS WAY HOME ON THE MORROW.

THUS then was the goodly Odysseus, the toil-stout, praying there
While the damsel unto the city the might of the mules did bear.
But when she reached her father's most famous house and strong,
Therewith she stayed at the outdoor and about did her brothers throng.
Men like to the Gods undying; and they loosed the mules from the wain,
And therewithal the raiment bore into the house again.
But she to her chamber hied her, and the fire did a handmaid light,
An old thrall from Aperæa, and Eurymedusa she hight.
Her once from Aperæa did the ships wrought shapely bring,
And men made her Alcinoüs' portion, because over all was he king,
And the folk Phæacian heard him as though a God he were.
So the white-armed Nausicaä in the house had she cherished there.
And now the fire she kindled and within the supper laid.

E'en then arose Odysseus to go townward, but the Maid,
Athene, shed around him much mist with good intent,
Lest one of the proud Phæacians should meet him as he went,
And with taunts his heart should be smiting and ask him what he was.
But as into the lovely city he was just about to pass
Came the Goddess, the Grey-eyed Athene, and met him in the road,
As a damsel tender of years that bare the pitcher's load,

And as she stood before him, Odysseus asked and began:

"O child, wouldst thou be my leader to the house of a certain man,
E'en him they call Alcinoüs, who o'er these men is king?
For hither I come as a stranger, toil-worn and wandering,
Afar from a land aloof; so I know not one of those
Who dwell within the city and work the field and the close."

But the Grey-eyed, the Goddess Athene, in thuswise answered again:
"The house, O father and stranger, will I show thee straight and plain,
For hard indeed it lieth to my noble father's abode.
But go thou in all silence while I lead thee on the road,
And ask thou nought of any, and look in no man's face;
For strange men they scarce may do with, the people of this place,
Nor in loving-kindness hold him who comes from otherwhere.
But trusting in the swiftness of their speedy ships they fare
Across the mighty sea-gulf: since by Earth-shaker's gift,
As a bird, as a thought that flitteth, their ships are eager and swift."

Thuswise spake Pallas Athene, and straightway led him on,
And after the feet of the Goddess forthright the way he won;
But the ship-famed proud Phæacians of him did nothing wot
As he went through their burg amidmost, for Athene suffered it not,
The fair-haired awful Goddess; for round about him still
She shed that holy dimness from the heart of her goodwill.

But Odysseus went, and he wondered at the keels in the haven laid.
And the Meeting Place of the heroes, and the long walls lofty made,
And dight with pales embattled, an exceeding wondrous thing.
But when at last they were come to the famous house of the king
Then the Goddess, the Grey-eyed Athene, set forth and spake out so:

"This then, O father, O stranger, is the house ye would have me to show;
And therein now wilt thou find them, the kings Zeus cherishèd,
At the feast and the banquet sitting: go in and have no dread:
For the man that is stout and hardy drives all things better home,
Whatever of deeds be toward; yea, e'en if from far he come.
Now first shall ye meet the mistress in the hall of the builded place,
Arete named of menfolk; and her breeding and her race
Are of those of whom is begotten Alcinoüs the king.
From Poseidon the Earth-shaker first did Nausithoüs spring,
From him and Peribœa, fairest of woman-kind;
And she was the youngest daughter of Eurymedon high of mind,
Who was king in the days aforetime of the Giants in their pride.
And he wrecked his folk infatuate, and himself in wrack he died.
With her then mingled Poseidon, and begat a lad as then
Nausithoüs, the great-souled king o'er Phæacian men.
But Rhexenor and Alcinoüs next Nausithoüs begat.
Then, Rhexenor while yet son-less in his halls new-wedded he sat,
White-bowed Apollo slew him, and one child he left alone,
Arete, and her as a helpmate Alcinoüs wooed and won,
With such worship as no woman on earth hath had before,
Of all that under menfolk rule over house and store.
And she from the heart moreover hath been worshipped in each thing,
Yea, and is now, of her children and Alcinoüs the king,
And the folk withal, who behold her as though a Goddess she were;
And as through the burg she walketh with words they worship her.
For nothing of wit she lacketh, nor of wisdom wanteth she:
And whomso in heart she holdeth, yea, e'en if men they be,
She setteth at one; but for thee, if her heart of thee be fain,
Then good hope mayest thou cherish to look on thy friends again,
And the land of the ancient fathers, and thine own high-builded abode."

So spake Athene the Grey-eyed, and therewith she wended her road
O'er the all-unharvested sea-plain, and left the lovely place,
And unto Marathon hied she, and Athens wide of ways,
And into Erectheus' homestead and his steadfast house she came.

But Odysseus came his ways to Alcinoüs' house of fame;
And many things he pondered as he stood on the threshold of brass;
For therein as though of the sun or the moon a glory there was,
And it shone through the high-roofed house of Alcinoüs great of heart.
This way and that all brazen went the walls from part to part,
From the threshold to the house-heart, and blue ran the frieze along.
Of gold were the doors that warded the house well-builded and strong,
And on the brazen threshold did silver shafts uphold
The lintel wrought of silver, and the door-ring was of gold.
There hounds of gold and of silver each side the threshold stood,
Which same had Hephæstus fashioned, with cunning craft and good,
For Alcinoüs the great-heart, to guard the house and door,
And deathless are they, unageing through all days evermore.
But within were fast-set high-seats by the wall's face here and there,
From the threshold to the house-heart, and dorsars woven fair,
Fine-webbed, were cast upon them, the work that women flit;
Therein the chiefs Phæacian are ever wont to sit
And eat and drink, for enduring is the store that there they hold.
There too on well-built bases stand serving-swains of gold,
And in their hands are holding the torches burning bright,
The guests that feast a night-tide throughout the hall to light.
Now the women thralls are fifty that there the housework mind;
And some upon the handmill the yellow corn they grind,
And some the loom they traverse, and some they twine the thread,
A-sitting e'en as the leaves are of the poplars high o'erhead;
And o'er the linen close-woven wet oil will ever slip.

For e'en as Phæacian menfolk have craft to drive the ship
Swift through the seas o'er all men, so weave the women well.
For to them hath Athene given all others to excel
In the craft of works most lovely, and the skill of mysteries.

But without by the gate of the forecourt a garden great there lies,
Four plough-gates wide, and about it all round a hedge doth go.
And therein are the tall trees bearing, and fresh and fair they grow.
The pear-tree and pomegranate and apple shining fair,
And figs that exceed in sweetness, and olives strong to bear.
And thereof is the fruit unfailing, and it never maketh stay
For winter or for summer yearlong: therein alway
The west wind brings some forward, and ripeneth others there.
There apple waxeth on apple, pear putteth forth on pear,
And grape-bunch upon grape-bunch, and on fig fig presseth yet.

A heavy-fruited vineyard moreover there is set;
And some part of the yield all sunny amidst a place made plain
Is dried by the sunbeams' burning; and some part they gather and gain;
And other some are they treading: beyond, with the bloom late cast,
Are the grapes unripe, and others meanwhile into blackness past.
And there set out in order along the outermost row
Bloom the garden-beds all diverse, and yearlong there they glow.
Two wells there are moreover, and scattering goeth one
O'er all the garth; and the other sets off 'neath the threshold to run
Toward the lofty house; and the townfolk are wont to water them there.
Lo the gifts to Alcinoüs given by the Gods, how great and fair!

So the toil-stout goodly Odysseus there stood and marvelled a space;
But when his heart was fulfilled with the wonder of the place,
Then over the homestead's threshold lightly his foot he set;

And within the lords Phæacian and their councillors he met,
As they poured forth wine from the beakers to the keen-eyed Argus-bane,
The latest cup that they poured ere of bed they were mindful and fain.
So the toil-stout goodly Odysseus sped on through house and hall,
Bearing close darkness with him that Athene wrapped him withal,
Until he came to Arete and Alcinoüs the king.
But when round the knees of Arete his hands did Odysseus fling,
Then away and into nothing did the holy darkness draw,
And they of the house were speechless when a man amidst they saw,
And they marvelled as they beheld him: but Odysseus made his prayer:

"Arete, thou the daughter of Rhexenor, Godhead's peer,
To thy knees I come and thy husband, I toil-worn with the ways;
And I come to these thy guest-folk; God give them happy days!
And the wealth within his homestead to his sons may each hand on,
With whatsoever of worship from the people he hath won!
But I pray thee further my sending to my fatherland with speed,
Since afar from friends and kinsmen I suffer woeful need."

He spake, and adown in the hearth-place amid the ash he sat
By the fire-side: all were speechless and spake no word thereat,
Till at last the ancient hero Echeneüs spake the word;
Who amidst of the folk Phæacian was the very oldest lord,
And in speech was he excelling and in all ancient skill.
So he put forth the word amidst them and spake with all goodwill:

"Alcinoüs, nought is it seemly, nor thee doth it befit,
That a guest on the ground of the hearth-stead amidst the ash should sit.
But these on thy word are awaiting, and so the speech forbear.
Come, raise up thy guest and set him on a silver-studded chair,
And give word to the swains of service the wine in the bowl to blend,

That to Zeus the Fain of the Thunder a cup we now may send,
E'en he who furthereth suppliants that men's compassion win.
But the guest, let the handmaids give him to supper of what is within.

But when the holy might of Alcinoüs hearkened the word,
By the hand of Odysseus taking, the wise-heart shifty lord,
Up from the hearth he raised him to a seat that shimmered and shone,
Whence he put the fain-of-valour, Laodamas his son,
Who sat the nighest unto him and dear his heart did hold.
Then a damsel brought hand-water in a ewer fair wrought of gold,
And straightway for the washing in a dish of silver poured,
And she drew anigh unto him the smoothed and polished board.
And a goodwife old and reverend set forth for him the bread,
And such diverse meat as was ready for his delight she spread.
But when Odysseus the toil-stout had eaten and drunken, forthright
A word unto the henchman spake out Alcinoüs' might:

"Pontonoüs, mix thou the bowl, and serve out wine amain
To each man in the hall, that as now unto Zeus the Thunder-fain,
The aid of piteous suppliants, the cup may be poured and sent."

He spake, and Pontonoüs straightway the wine heart-gladdening blent,
And dealt it out to all men from cup to cup in turn.
But when they had poured forth duly and drunk as each did yearn,
Then Alcinoüs fell unto speaking, and a word amidst them spoke:

"Hearken, O lords and elders of this Phæacian folk,
To the words that I say, thus bidden by the heart within my breast.
Depart, since now ye have feasted, and at home lie down to rest;
But tomorrow yet more elders together let us call,
And feast the guest in our homestead, and unto the Gods withal

Do holy rites and goodly, and then of the speeding home
Bethink us, that this our guest-friend without labour or grief may come
By our speeding unto the land of his fathers over the sea
In all joy of heart and swiftly, though far aloof he be:
So that he suffer no evil and scathe till he be there,
And on his own earth goeth; but thereafter shall he bear
What things soever Doom and the Dreadful Spinners span
With the thread of his beginning when his mother bore him a man.
But if he be one of the Deathless and be come adown from the skies,
Then this is a new-wrought fashion of the things that the Gods devise:
For hitherto have the Godfolk been manifest to behold
When we the gifts have been giving most glorious an hundredfold,
Such whiles with us have they feasted and beside us have set them adown:
Yea, and if some wayfarer wending hath happed upon them alone,
In no wise have they hid them, since indeed of their kin are we,
As the Cyclops and the races of the wild-men giants be."

But thereto the guileful Odysseus made answer presently:
"Alcinoüs, put forth the thought from thy mind, for in nowise do I
Beliken myself to the Deathless who hold the heavenly space,
But in flesh and in soul am I ever of the deathful manfolks' race.
But whatsoever of menfolk most labour-laden ye know,
To them myself would I liken, because of my grief and my woe.
And now indeed might I tell thee the tales of many an ill,
Yea, all that heap of troubles that I toiled in by God's will:
But I pray you amidst of my sorrow that ye suffer me supper to eat,
For nought indeed more shameless than the belly-beast may ye meet,
When need and he are bidding that we mind us of his part,
Although we be worn and wasted and have sorrow in the heart.
Thus I in my heart have sorrow, but the belly evermore
Will bid me to eat and to drink and forget my sorrow sore,

Whatso my soul may have suffered, and to filling forceth me.
But I prithee look ye to it when tomorrow's dawn shall be,
That this poor wretch unhappy to his father-land ye speed,
Yea, after all he hath suffered. But let life leave me indeed
When I see mine own, and my thralls and my great house high o'erhead."

So he spake, and all they of the land accorded and yeasaid,
To further the guest on his way since he spake what was but right.
But when they had poured out duly, and had drunk to their hearts' delight,
Then each one home to his house to rest in sleep did they fare;
But the goodly Odysseus was left in the hall of the homestead there.
But Arete sat beside him, and godlike Alcinoüs sat,
While the remnants of the banquet thencefrom the handmaids gat.
Then spake white-armed Arete and put forth a word thereto
When she looked on that fair raiment, for cloak and kirtle she knew,
Since she herself had wrought them, e'en she and her womenfolk.
Thus then the speech she uttered, and wingèd words she spoke:

"O guest, now first will I be to ask thee somewhat here:
What man art thou of menfolk? Who gave thee thy raiment to wear?
And whence dost thou give thyself out to have wandered here o'er the [main?"
But Odysseus of many a rede spake out and answered again:
"O Queen, right hard were the work to tell thee the tale all through,
For the Gods above have dealt me a plenteous wealth of woe;
But of this that thou askest and seekest I will tell it all to thee.
There lieth the isle Ogygia, far off amid the sea,
Where dwelleth the Daughter of Atlas, Calypso the guileful one,
The fair-tressed awful Goddess, and there she mingleth with none,
Whether it be of the Godfolk or of men that perish and die.
But led by the God to her hearth alone a wretch came I,

After that Zeus had smitten my ship with his thunder white,
And amidst the wine-dark salt-sea had cloven it outright.
And there indeed my fellows, the brave men, perished and died,
But I caught the curved ship's keel in my arms and thus did I ride.
Nine days I drifted suchwise, but the tenth by night and cloud
The Gods to Ogygia brought me, that is Calypso's abode,
Where she dwelleth fair-tressed and awful. She took me and cherished
And with all her heart she loved me, and meant to make me be [me,
A deathless man for ever, unageing all my days;
But the soul in my breast in nowise might she win unto her ways.
In that island then was I hoarded for seven unbroken years,
While the deathless raiment she gave me I wetted with my tears;
But when the eighth year of my sojourn in the course of time came on,
Then verily she bade me and egged me to begone,
By the message of Zeus commanded: or maybe her mind did shift.
On a strong-bound raft she sped me and gave me many a gift,
Both bread and honey-sweet wine; and she clad me in deathless weed,
And a harmless wind and gentle she set forth for my need.
Seven days and ten did I sail and passed the salt-seas o'er,
But on the eighteenth day showed the shadowy mountain shore
Of your land, and thereat, poor wretch! the heart rejoiced in me.
But yet of the plenteous trouble yoke-mate was I to be,
Which Poseidon the Earth-shaker against my life did raise; [ways,
For he stirred up the winds against me, and bound me aback from my
And piled up a sea most monstrous, whose swell would not suffer me
To be borne along bewailing and still on the raft to be.
Then the storm-blast scattered it wide, and swimming on I clave
The mighty gulf of the sea-flood until the wind and the wave
Had borne me on and brought me to this your land anigh;
But the swell as I strove to land 'gainst the sea-cliffs mightily
Drave on perforce, and my body in an ugly place would have cast.

But back I went a-swimming until I came at last
To the river, and there indeed at the place that was most to my mind,
All smooth of rocks and sheltered against the drift of the wind,
I fell ashore, gathering my spirit: but the Deathless Night came on,
And thence I gat me away; from the Zeus-fed river I won,
And lay down to sleep in the thicket, and the leaves all over me spread,
And sleep that had no limit the God about me shed.
There then amidst the leafage, despite my sorrow sore,
Nightlong I slept till morning and the midmost day was o'er,
And the sun again was setting when sweet sleep went from me.
Then the handmaids of thy daughter on the beach there did I see
All a-sporting; and amidst them as a goddess was she fair.
I besought her: and surely of wisdom hath her soul a goodly share,
Nor indeed could one ever be hoping on a youngling thus to hit
Who could do as she: since the younger be ever wanting in wit.
For she gave me bread to my need, and gave me the dark-red wine,
And she washed me in the river and gave me these garments of thine.
Thus then the truth have I told thee, though I be laden with pain."

But Alcinoüs uttered the word, and thuswise answered again:
"O guest, my child meseemeth in unseemly manner wrought,
Whereas thee amidst of her maidens to our house she never brought,
When of her the first of all folk the suppliant ye were."

But Odysseus full of wisdom thuswise he answered there:
"O hero, nought for this cause do thou chide the blameless maid.
For to follow her on with her handmaids in good sooth me she bade;
But thereto was I nought willing for shame, and for fear of thee,
Lest thou in thine heart shouldst be angered beholding her and me.
For jealous indeed full often are the folks of earthly men."

But him Alcinoüs answered and thuswise spake again:
"O guest, the heart in my bosom is nowise idly wroth
With such matters: yet done seemly the thing is better worth.
Would to Father Zeus and Apollo and Athene that it might be
That thou, e'en thou as I see thee, and of like mind unto me,
Might wed my child and be called my son and here abide!
And a house then would I give thee and wealth and holdings wide,
If thou thereto wert willing. For against thy will shall none
Of Phæacians stay thee; forbid it, O Zeus, that it be done!
But thy speeding I now do ordain, that heed thereof thou may'st keep,
For tomorrow: then down shalt thou lay thee all overcome by sleep,
While they drive through the calm of the seaflood until at last thou be come
To thy house and the land of thy fathers; yea, whereso may be thy home.
Yea, e'en if it be much farther than Eubœa lies in the sea,
Which such of our folk as have seen it give out the furthest to be,
E'en they that erewhile flitted Rhadamanthus, the tawny one,
When Tityus far he followed, the great Earth's very son,
And thither then they brought him, and wore through all the way
And came home again unwearied in one and the selfsame day.
Thereby may'st thou wot full surely how no ships are like unto mine,
And no shipmen like my shipmen with the oar to toss the brine."

So he spake; and the goodly Odysseus, the toil-stout, then was fain,
And he put forth a word of praying, and named him, and spake again;
"Zeus Father, now if the deed as much as the word be worth
Of Alcinoüs, then may his glory from off the corn-kind earth
Die nevermore: and I, my fatherland may I reach!"

But as in suchlike fashion they spake out each unto each,
White-armed Arete was bidding unto her handmaids there
To lay the bed in the cloister, and purple blankets fair

To cast thereon, and thereover the coverlet to strew,
And thereon the cloaks thick-woven atop of all to do.
Straightway then forth from the hall, and candle in hand they went;
And when the bed they had dighted in fashion diligent
With words they aroused Odysseus to stand up upon his feet:
"O guest, arouse and go bedward, for the bed is arrayed right meet."

So they spake, and to him the slumber seemed good and timely now.
And so slept the goodly Odysseus, the toil-stout, lying alow
Upon the jointed bedstead in the echoing cloister there.
But Alcinoüs slept in the nook of his house well-builded and fair,
And beside him the Queen, his helpmeet, arrayed her bed and her gear.

BOOK VIII.

ARGUMENT.

ALCINOÜS BRINGETH ODYSSEUS TO THE ASSEMBLY, AND BIDDETH MEN PLAY BEFORE ODYSSEUS TILL THE TIME IS COME FOR HIS DEPARTURE: DEMODOCUS THE MINSTREL TELLETH THE TALE OF HEPHÆSTUS AND THE LOVE OF ARES AND APHRODITE: GREAT GIFTS ARE GIVEN TO ODYSSEUS: HE WEEPETH AT THE SONG OF DEMODOCUS CONCERNING THE WOODEN HORSE: ALCINOÜS PERCEIVETH IT AND PRAYETH HIM TO TELL HIS STORY.

NOW when the Mother of Morning, Rose-fingered Dawn, was bright,
Then forth from his bed rose up Alcinoüs' holy might,
And the city-waster, Odysseus, the Zeus-kin, rose from his bed;
Then the holy might of Alcinoüs thenceforth to the meeting led,
Whereas the folk Phæacian by the ships did them abide:
So they came there and sat them adown on the smooth stones side by side.

But all about the city did Pallas Athene go
In the likeness of the henchman of Alcinoüs skilled to know,
For Odysseus the mighty-hearted devising return in the end,
And by this and that man standing such a word to him did she send:
"Come then, ye lords Phæacian, and you that wise-hearts be, 11
Let us go to the Meeting of Men that this stranger ye may see
Who is now new-come to the homestead of Alcinoüs skilled in thought,
A wanderer over the sea-flood, and like to the Deathless wrought."

The will and the heart of each one suchwise she egged on then;

And soon was the Meeting-Stead filled and the seats of the gathering men,
And most they fell to wonder when they saw him in the place,
The wise son of Laertes; for indeed with a holy grace
The man and his head and his shoulders did Athene there enfold,
And taller therewith she made him and mightier to behold,
So that of all Phæacians he now might gain the love,
And dread withal and worship; and the feats whereby they would prove
The very might of Odysseus he should bring to an ending fair.

But when they all were thronging and gathered together there,
Alcinoüs took up the word, and thus amidst them spoke:
"Hearken, O lords and elders of this Phæacian folk,
To the word that the soul within me now biddeth me speak and say;
This unknown guest that hither to my house hath wandered away,
Be he come from the men of the Rising or them of the Setting Sun,
He biddeth us for a flitting, and prayeth that sure it be done.
So now, as ever aforetime, his flitting let us speed:
For surely hath never a man sought here to my house in need,
And here for the lack of speeding abode in sorrow sore.
But come now, let us be shoving to the holy salt-sea shore
A black ship for the first time sailing, and let shipmen fifty and two
From amidst the folk be chosen, e'en such as are best to do.
But when ye have bound the oars to the benches, then one and all
Come forth and unto my homestead, and there to the feasting fall
In speedy wise; and for my part to all will I deal to my best.
This charge give I to the shipmen; but verily as for the rest,
The sceptered kings, now come ye to my house that is builded fair,
That this man, the guest and the stranger, in the halls we may cherish there.
Nor yet let any gainsay it. And Demodocus have ye along,
The holy minstrel to whom have the Gods given glory of song, [won."
To make joy with what singing soever from his furthering soul shall be

So he spake and he led them away, and the sceptred ones followed him on,
And the henchman went to be bringing the holy minstrel there.
And the shipmen two-and-fifty, well chosen, down did they fare
To the shore of the holy sea-plain as the king had bidden it be.
But when they were come to the ship and down to the shore of the sea,
Then unto the deep of the water the black ship did they get,
And into the black ship straightway the mast and the sails they set,
And the oars withal they fitted in the thole-bights wrought of skin,
And the sails aloft they hoisted, and in order all did win.
Then high in the deeps they moored her, and thereafter went they all
To the house of the king the wise-heart, and Alcinoüs' mighty hall,
And the courts and the garth and the houses were full of the gathering
And of old men were there many, and many young as then.
But twelve sheep there for the feasting Alcinoüs hallowed and slew,
And eight swine with teeth white-gleaming, and of shambling oxen two.
These then they flayed and dighted and arrayed a feast full fair.

But withal came the henchman leading the faithful singer there.
Of the Muse was he well belovèd, who had given him good and ill;
Of his eyesight had she reft him, but had given him sweet-voiced skill.
So for him had Pontonoüs set a silver-studded chair
Amidmost of the feasters, 'gainst a pillar long and fair;
And over his head on a pin his harp the shrilly-sweet
Had he hung, and had shown him moreover how his hand therewith
And he set a basket beside him, and a fair-dight table withal,
And a cup of wine for his drinking, when his soul thereto should call.

So they reached out their hands to the dainties that ready before them
But when the yearning for meat and for drink they had done away,
Then the Muse stirred up the minstrel to sing of the deeds of men
Whose great renown and glory to the wide heavens reached as then,

To wit the Strife of Odysseus and Achilles, Peleus' son,
How with fierce words they wrangled at a feast, a glorious one
Of the Gods, and Agamemnon the folk-king then was glad
In his heart that the chiefs Achæan such strife between them had.
For thereof did Phœbus Apollo foretelling words declare
In Pythos the very lovely, when the stony threshold there
He crossed and sought foretelling; and uprolled the tide of ill
On the Danaan folk and the Trojan by Zeus the Mighty's will.

Such song sang the glorious singer, but Odysseus, taking hold
Of his mighty purple mantle, with his strong hand drew a fold
Across his head to hide it, and his goodly face he hid,
For shame he had of Phæacians for the tears from his brow that slid;
But whensoever the singer, the holy one, ceased for a space,
Then, wiping his tears away, he drew the cloak from his face,
And, taking the beaker twofold, to the Gods he poured as then;
But when once more he awoke it, and the chiefs of Phæacian men
Were egging him on to singing for their joy in the words he said,
Then again was Odysseus hiding his face, as moan he made.

But there from all the others he hid the flow of tears,
But Alcinoüs knew it, and noted alone of all his peers;
For he sat exceeding nigh him and his heavy groan he heard:
So unto those Phæacians oar-fain he spake the word:

"O lords of the folk Phæacian, O elders hearken and hear!
Our souls have we now contented with the feast and the equal cheer,
And the harp-song, ever the yoke-mate of all feast that fair shall be:
Now fare we forth and try us in the strife of game and glee,
That our guest when home he cometh to his friends may tell the tale
How we above all others in the play of fists prevail,

And the wrestling play, and the leaping and in the swift-foot race."

So saying, forth he led them and they followed from the place ;
And the henchman hung on a pin the clear-voiced harp withal,
And Demodocus' hand was he taking to bring him forth from the hall;
By the road that the others had wended he led him on the way,
Yea, all the chiefs Phæacian, to look upon the play.
Forth they fared to the Stead of Meeting, and there followed a mighty throng,
A thousand fold a thousand ; and up stood the young and the strong :
Acroneus and Ocyalus and Elatreus there arose,
Nauteus, Prymneus, Eretmeus, Anchialus : next to those
Ponteus and Proreus and Thoön and Anabesineus came on,
And Amphialus ; Polyneüs begat him, Tectons' son ;
And Euryalus moreover, the Man's-bane Ares' peer ;
And Naubolus' son, of his body the goodliest fellow there
Of all Phæacians, saving Laodamas the great.
For three sons of the great Alcinoüs uprose on the play to wait,
E'en Laodamas and Halius and Clytoneüs God-high.

Now all these men in the foot-race their manhood first should try.
Straight stretched the course from the starting, and all together amain
Full swiftly forth were they fleeting and stirred up the dust of the plain.
Great Clytoneüs in running was best of all the band,
And as far as the mules draw furrow across the fallow land
So far he outwent the others when he came to the folk again.

Next then in the play of wrestling they strove with care and pain,
And therein it was Euryalus who prevailed o'er all the best ;
But Amphialus in the leaping by far outwent the rest,
And in casting the stone Elatreus excelled o'er every one,
And Laodamas in the boxing, Alcinoüs' valiant son.

But now, when all in their hearts were fain of the game and the play,
Laodamas spake amongst them, Alcinoüs' son 'gan say:
"Come, friends, let us ask the stranger if of games he knoweth aught,
And hath learned to play; for his body in no evil wise is wrought:
Nay, look to his thighs and his legs, and both his hands forsooth!
And the brawny neck and stark strength of the man! Nor yet in youth
Is he lacking, but worn and wasted with many a toilsome woe,
For nothing worse than the sea to crush up a man do I know,
And to wear him down; yea, even though exceeding strong he be."

Then Euryalus took up the word, and thuswise answered he: 140
"Laodamas, this hast thou spoken in goodly wise and well;
Then do thou thyself go hail him, and this matter to him tell."

But Alcinoüs' son, the valiant, when his answer he had heard,
Came forth, and, standing amidmost, to Odysseus spake the word:
"Come thou too, guest and father, and try thee in the play,
If thereof ye be skilled in somewise, as it seemeth like ye may;
For no fame may a man win better the while he hath his life
Than from what his feet have accomplished, or his hands amidst the strife.
Up then, and try thee in playing, and scatter the griefs from thy soul,
For not long shalt thou lack thy homefare, since even now did they roll
Thy ship adown to the water, and her folk are bound for the main."

But Odysseus of many a rede thus spake and answered again: 152
"Laodamas, why do ye taunt me, and bid me such a way?
Far more in my mind are my troubles than any game and play,
Who have borne so many and many, and such toil have laboured to earn,
And now am sitting amidst you craving but my return;
And thereof your king am I praying, and all the folk of your place."

Him then Euryalus answered and chid him face to face :
"Nay, I liken thee not, O Stranger, to a man well skilled of his hands
In all the plays that are toward mid the men of many lands,
But rather to one that haunteth the ship of many an oar,
A captain over shipmen that are chapmen furthermore ;
Of thy freight for ever mindful, an overlooker of wares
And greedy gain : of no man-strife belike shall be thy cares."

But the shifty Odysseus answered, grim-eyed from knitted brow :
"O stranger, basely thou speakest ; as the fool of men art thou :
So the Gods from men are withholding, nor give all grace to each ;
Neither inbred wit nor wisdom, nor skill of open speech.
For indeed there is such among menfolk as a feebler body hath had,
But God crowneth his speech with fairness, and all they that behold him are glad ;
For with shamefast sweetness and surely he speaketh among men ;
When the folk is gathered together he excelleth verily then,
And men look on his ways through the city as though a God he were.
But another is of his body the Deathless Godhead's peer,
Yet his words with the grace of sweetness are nowise wreathed about.
Thus thou in beauty excellest, nor of other guise no doubt
Would a very God be fashioned ; but thy mind is an empty thing.
But the soul that is dear in my breast hast thou set thee to stir up and sting,
And in manner unmeet thou speakest : for I am not new to the play,
As thou sayest, but mid the foremost meseems was I once on a day,
While yet in my hands I trusted and the might of my youth unworn ;
Now of scathe and of grief am I holden, for a many things have I borne,
Both the wars of men and the waves that were grievously hard on the way.
But e'en as I am, with such burden of griefs, will I try me the play,
For thy word to me is soul-biting, and thou speakest to egg me on."

Therewith, and yet clad in his mantle, he ran forth and caught up the stone,

Right great and thick to handle, and by no little greater than those
Wherewith the folk Phæacian contended in their throws;
And, whirling it round, he hurled it forthright with his mighty hand;
And away the stone flew humming, and they crouched alow on the land,
The long-oar-wont Phæacians, the ship-renownèd men,
From the flight of the stone, and it flew o'er all marks marked as then,
As light from his hand it speeded. But Athene marked its fall;
Yea, she in the shape of a man, and therewith she spake unto all:

"Yea, e'en a blind man, O Stranger, could discern this cast where it went,
By groping about; since in nowise with the crowd of casts is it blent,
But is far the first. For this play then, hold up thine heart on high,
For no cast of Phæacian menfolk shall reach or pass it by."

So she spake; but the goodly Odysseus, the toil-stout, then was glad,
When he saw that a friend and a fellow amid the lists he had;
And therewith he spake more lightly to those Phæacian men:

"O youths, come up to that one! And yet the next one then
I deem indeed that as far, or further yet, shall it fly;
But whoso of all whom his heart or his soul now biddeth to try,
Let him hither with me to be playing, since my wrath ye needs must stir,
In boxing or wrestling or foot-race; I begrudge in no play that is here
With any man Phæacian, save Laodamas, to contend;
For he is my very guest-friend, and who would fight with a friend?
A fool were he of menfolk, and a worthless wight were he,
Who on him that gave him harbour thrust the strife of mastery,
Amidst an outland people his own well-being to mar:
But of others none will I gainsay, or slight, whoever they are;
But rather I fain would know them, and prove them face to face,
For at all plays am I handy that are played amid manfolk's race.

I know how to handle the bow well shaven round about,
And the first would I be in shooting my man mid the foeman's rout,
E'en though a many fellows together gathered were
Against the folk of the foemen the arrow-shot to bear.
Yea, Philoctetes only with the bow outwent me then,
When, amidst the folk of the Trojans, well cast the Achæan men;
But of all the others I boast me to be the front and the head,
Of all mortals dwelling on earth, and living and eating bread.
But with the men of aforetime I have no mind to vie,
As Heracles or Eurytus the Œchalean high;
For these, they strove with the Deathless about the deeds of the bow.
So untimely Eurytus perished, nor yet unto eld did he grow
In his house and his hall; for Apollo in anger slew him outright,
For this thing, that he challenged the God to contend in the bowman's sleight.
But further than others the arrow, and the spearshaft can I cast;
Forsooth in the foot-race only I doubt I may be o'erpassed
By Phæacians; for very sorely and unseemly am I worn
By the wash of many billows: since nought in our ship was borne
Unfailing store of victual, and my limbs are all undone."

So he spake, and they held their peace and kept silence every one,
Save that Alcinoüs only spake out and answered again:
"O guest, in good part we take it, thy speech outspoken and plain,
For the valour with thee abiding to us wouldst thou prove and show,
Being wroth with him that arose and chid thee awhile ago.
Whereas there is none of mortals who thy valour would gainsay
If his heart had understanding how to speak the righteous way.
But follow my word, I pray thee, that thy tale thereof may come
To another of the heroes when thou sitt'st in thine hall at home
Afeasting with thy helpmate and the seed of thee begot,
And our craft thou then rememberest, e'en the deeds that Zeus doth allot

Unto us in measure unfailing; yea, e'en from our fathers' day.
For we are not unmatched boxers, nor first in the wrestling play,
But the best of men ashipboard and in running afoot full fleet;
And ever we love the banquet and the harp and the dancing feet,
And the change of fair fresh raiment, and the warm bath and the bed.
Come then, ye dancers Phæacian, who are most of lustihead,
Play ye, that this our guest-friend unto his friends may tell,
When home at last he is gotten, how all others we excel
In shipcraft and the footrace, and the ordered dance and the song.
But now for Demodocus go ye, fetch the clear-voiced harp and strong,
If ye may find it lying somewhere in my house and hall."

Thus Alcinoüs the godlike; but the henchman rose withal
To bring from the kingly dwelling the hollow harp away.
Then uprose the chosen judges, and nine in all were they,
Folk-chosen men to order the games in everything:
The dancing-floor they levelled, and they made a wide-drawn ring.
Therewith drew nigh the henchman with the shrilly harp in hand
For Demodocus standing amidmost, and about him there did stand
The chosen youths well wotting the dance and all its skill,
And they beat the holy earth with their feet, and Odysseus still
Gazed on at the feet swift twinkling, and his heart was in wonder long.

But now fell to the harper and struck up a goodly song
Concerning the love of Ares for Aphrodite the crowned,
How first they privily mingled in Hephæstus' house renowned:
And many a gift he gave her, and befouled with scathe and shame
The bed of King Hephæstus. But to him the tale-teller came,
E'en the Sun, whose eyes had beheld them as in love they mingled there.
But Hephæstus hearkening the word that was hard for the heart to bear
Went straightway to his stithy, building guile in the deeps of his heart.

A huge anvil he set on the stock, and chains ne'er to be sundered apart,
And ne'er to be broken he forged, that fast they be holden there.
But when in his wrath against Ares he had fashioned the guile and the snare,
Forthwith he went to his chamber where his bed belovèd lay,
And the bonds he drew in a circle round the bed-posts every way,
And many o'erhead were hanging from the tie-beam up on high,
All as fine as are the cobwebs, so that none could see them with eye,
Not e'en of the Gods, the Happy, with such plenteous craft were they wrought.
But when the bed all over in the net and the snare he had caught,
He feigned to depart unto Lemnos, and the burg well-builded and fair,
Which to him of all lands of the Earth is the best-belovèd and dear.
But no blind watch held Ares, the Lord of the Bridle of Gold,
When Hephæstus, Glory of Craftsmen, departing he thus did behold;
But he hastened and went to the dwelling of Hephæstus high-renowned,
So sore for the love was he yearning of Cythereä the crowned.
And she but of late was come from her father, the mighty Son
Of Cronos, and there was she sitting. So into the house he won,
And he took her hand in his hand, and spake the word and said:

"Oh hither, O love, and bedward! and we twain in rest to be laid,
For no more mid the folk is Hephæstus, but is gone far out of reach,
And belike aloof unto Lemnos, and the Sintians wild of speech."

So he spake, and to her most welcome it seemed, that lying abed;
So up they went and lay down, and therewith about them were spread
The bonds and the crafty snare of Hephæstus the all-wise,
And never a limb might they move, and they had no might to arise.
And withal were they ware of the cunning and that nought it availed to be
Then drew anigh unto them the glorious Haltfoot-one; [gone.
He had turned aback from Lemnos, nor ever came to the land,
For the Sun had been his watchman and had brought the tale to hand.

So into the house he hastened, his dear heart sorrowing sore,
And fierce wrath had hold upon him as he stood in the porch of the door:
In a fearful voice he shouted and to all the Gods 'gan cry:

"Zeus father, and all ye Blessèd, ye Gods that never die,
Here! look on a thing to be laughed at, and hard to be dealt with for shame,
How the Daughter of Zeus, Aphrodite, still scorneth me the lame
For ever; and ever she loveth Ares the Bringer-to-Nought,
For that he is fair and well-fashioned, while into the world was I brought
A weakling: and none other is guilty of the scorn [born!
Save the twain that begat me and bore me. And would I had never been
But now indeed shall ye look on these twain as in love they lie,
Having gotten them up to my bed: and I look and shamed am I.
But not e'en for a minute meseemeth suchwise would lie those twain,
Though sore be their love, nor for long of such rest shall they be fain;
Yet the snare and the bonds about them shall hold them nowise slack
Till all those gifts of wooing her father pays me aback,
That to him I erst made over for the damsel shameless-faced.
For as fair as is his daughter so little is she chaste."

So he spake: round the brass-floored house the Gods were gathered indeed.
Came Poseidon, Shaker of Earth; came Hermes, good at need;
And thither the King Apollo, the Far-off shooter came;
But withal the queens of the God-folk, each bided at home for shame.

So around the porch were they standing the Gods that give all good,
And uprose the quenchless laughter from the Happy Gods, as they stood
And looked on all the cunning of wise-heart Hephæstus' snare;
And thus would one be saying as he looked on his neighbour there:

"Ill speed of ill deed cometh! the slow outrunneth the swift!

Even as now Hephæstus, though haltfoot, by his shift
Hath hold of Ares, the swiftest of all the Gods, of those
That dwell up in Olympus. Therefore the fine he owes."

Thus one unto another were they speaking of the thing:
But to Hermes spake Apollo, the son of Zeus the King:
"O Hermes, thou son of Zeus, thou Flitter, thou Giver of Gain,
E'en by strong bonds down-weighted yet wouldst thou not be fain
By the golden Aphrodite to lie along in bed?"

But the Flitter, the Bane of Argus, thus answered him and said:
"O King, Far-shooter, Apollo, I would that it might be;
Let bonds e'en thrice so many, untold, be laid on me,
Let all the Gods be onlooking and the queens at gaze stand by,
Yet with golden Aphrodite still were I fain to lie."

So he spake, and the laughter arose mid the Gods of the Deathless Day;
But the laugh held not Poseidon, who never ceased to pray
Hephæstus, Glory of Craftsmen, to let loose Ares the lord;
And speech therewith he uttered and sent forth a wingèd word:

"Loose him, and I will pledge me that whatso thou biddest he pay,
Yea, whatso things be of right mid the Gods of the Deathless Day."

But the ever-glorious Haltfoot made answer thereunto:
"Poseidon, thou Shaker of Earth, bid not the thing to do!
For ever the word of the worthless is a worthless thing to my mind.
And how among the Deathless thee can I hold and bind
If Ares goeth his ways, and both bonds and debt he break?"

But Poseidon, Shaker of Earth, he put forth the word and spake:

"Hephæstus, even if Ares should flee and go on his way,
And creep from under the debt, yet myself the same shall I pay."

And thereto in turn thus answered the Haltfoot, Glorious Lord:
"Nay, nowise is it seemly to gainsay thy given word."
So spake the Might of Hephæstus and undid the bonds and the snare.
But when of the bonds strong-fashioned the twain delivered were,
Then up they sprang, and Ares, his ways he wended to Thrace;
But laugh-loving Aphrodite unto Cyprus and the place
Of Paphos, where is her garden and her fragrant altar therein.
And there did the Graces bathe her, and with oil they sleeked her skin,
The deathless oil that sleeketh the Gods that never die;
And they did on her lovely raiment, a marvel to the eye.

Such tale sang the glorious minstrel, and great joy Odysseus had
In his heart as thereto he hearkened, and all the others were glad,
The oar-fain folk Phæacian, the ship-renownèd men.
But to Halius and Laodamas gave Alcinoüs bidding then
To dance alone together, since none might match them there.
So when in hand they had taken the purple ball and fair,
Which for them had Polybus fashioned, who nought of craft did lack,
Then one to the shadowy clouds would cast it, bending aback,
And therewithal the other aloft from the earth would bound
And lightly catch it again ere again his feet touched ground.
But when they had played the play of the straight-up cast of the ball,
Then on the Earth the fruitful unto dancing did they fall,
And from each unto each cast swiftly: and time beat the rest of those,
The youths round the ring a-standing, and great noise of the tramping arose.
Therewith Odysseus the goodly to Alcinoüs spake and said:
"Alcinoüs, king and lord, of the folk the foremost head,

Thou hast boasted of thy dancers as the best of all dancing plays;
Now indeed hast thou made it good, and thereon I marvel and gaze."

He spake, and the holy might of Alcinoüs was glad,
And straight for those Phæacians oar-fain a word he had:
"Hearken, O lords Phæacian, O elders, hearken ye!
Forsooth the stranger seemeth exceeding wise to be;
So come now let us give him as a guest-gift fitting things.
Lo ye! among this people are twelve renownèd kings
Their leaders and their judges, and the thirteenth man am I.
So let each man among us bring forward presently
A cloak well washed and a kirtle, and a talent of fine gold,
And lay all that together for the hand of our guest to hold,
That when he goeth to supper his heart may be glad and fain;
But Euryalus now with words atonement let him gain,
And with a gift moreover; for an unright word he said."

He spake, and all were consenting unto the thing he bade,
And each sent forth a henchman the gifts to take and bring;
And withal Euryalus answered and spake unto the King:
"O King and lord Alcinoüs, O foremost of the folk,
To the guest will I make atonement, as ye bid, for the word I spoke.
I will give him this sword all brazen; and lo the hilt thereto
Is silver wrought, and a scabbard of ivory sawn-anew
Is done all round about it. Unto him 'tis a worthy award."

So into his hand he gave it, the silver-hefted sword,
And therewithal he hailed him and set this word on the wing:
"All hail, O guest and father! and if some grievous thing
Hath been said, let the whirl-blasts catch it and bear it far away.
May the Gods to thy fatherland bring thee, and to look on thy wife on a [day

Right soon, since afar from thy friends thou bearest toilsome pain!"

But Odysseus of many a rede thus spake and answered again:
"All hail, O friend, to thee also! May God be good to thee,
Nor may'st thou lack it hereafter, this glaive thou givest me,
The gift which thou hast added to thine atoning word."

Therewith about his shoulders he hung the silvered sword.
But now the sun was setting, and the glorious gifts were come,
For the high-heart henchmen bore them to Alcinoüs' house and home;
And there did the sons receive them of Alcinoüs of renown,
And by their reverend mother the all-goodly gifts set down.
Then the holy might of Alcinoüs he led them forth withal,
And they departed and set them in the high seats of the hall.
Then the might of Alcinoüs spake, and unto Arete he said:
"O wife, bring hither a coffer full goodly, the goodliest made,
And lay thou a cloak well-washen and a decent kirtle therein,
And make hot the brass on the fire the water warm to win;
That the guest, having washed and looked on the things that lie so fair,
The gifts that the great Phæacians have brought and gathered here,
With the feast his heart may gladden, and may hear the song go up.
And I myself will give him my own fair golden cup,
That he in the hall of his homestead all days may remember me
When he poureth the wine unto Zeus and to all the Gods that be."

So he spake, and therewith Arete bade her handmaidens to heed
And get the three-foot caldron on the fire in haste and speed.
So the great three-foot bath-feeder they set on the fire to stand,
And therein they poured the water and thereunder laid the brand;
And the flame licked the caldron's belly and warm the water grew.
Meanwhile, for the guest Arete from the chamber brought thereto

A chest exceeding goodly, and therein for him to have
She laid the gold and the raiment which those Phæacians gave;
And therein she laid a mantle, and a kirtle, a goodly thing.
And withal she spake unto him and set this word on the wing:

"Do thou to the lid be looking, and bonds about it cast,
Lest one on the way beguile thee whenso thy soul hath passed
Into sweet sleep and slumber on thy black ship on the way."

But when the goodly Odysseus, the toil-stout, heard her say,
Then straight the lid he fitted, and fell the bonds to knit
With a crafty knot that Circe the goddess learned his wit.
Then straightway the handmaid bade him go up to the washing-vat,
And wash him therein; and he saw it, and his soul rejoiced thereat,
And the water warm; for nowise was he wont to be cherished with care
Since he left the house of Calypso of the lovely-knotted hair;
But that while with her was he cherished as a God is evermore.
But when the handmaids had washed him and with oil had sleeked him
A goodly cloak and a kirtle they did upon him then,
And he gat him up out of the bath-vat and away to the wine-drinking men.

But lo, Nausicaä, dowered with God-given beauty, stood
By the doorway of the feast-hall of the steadfast house and good;
And her eyes beheld Odysseus, and she fell a-wondering,
And the sound of her voice she uttered, and sent forth a word on the wing:

"Farewell, O guest! When thou comest to thy land where thou dost go,
Remember me, for life-ransom unto me the first dost thou owe!"

But Odysseus of many a rede thus answered for his part:
"Nausicaä, thou daughter of Alcinoüs, mighty of heart,

May Zeus the Great-voiced grant it, of Heré's Lord may I earn,
That unto my house I get me and see my day of return!
Then unto thee, O maiden, as unto a God, will I pray
For all days from henceforward; for thou gavest me life on a day."

He spake and sat him adown beside Alcinoüs' chair.
And now the wine were they blending, and dealing share by share;
And the henchman drew near leading the sweet-voiced singer along,
Demodocus dear to the people, and amidst the feasting throng
He set his seat and leaned it against a pillar tall.
Then Odysseus, wealthy of counsel, to the herald spake withal,
Having cut and carved a portion from the chine of a white-toothed boar,
With rich fat all about it (and yet was left much more):

"Bear forth this flesh, O henchman, to Demodocus, that he
May eat thereof; and I greet him, though grieved at heart I be;
For surely dear unto all men upon the earth that dwell
Are minstrels, and worthy of worship, since the Muse hath learned them well
To wend the ways of song-craft, and she loves the minstrel race."

Therewith the henchman bore it unto the hands and the place
Of Demodocus the hero, and he took it and was glad.
And men reached out their hands to the dainties that before them there [they had.
But when the desire for meat and for drink they had done away,
Unto Demodocus then 'gan the wise Odysseus to say:
"Demodocus, thee of all mortals do I ever worship and praise,
Whether the Muse, Zeus' Daughter, or Apollo learned thee of lays;
Because of the doom of Achæans dost thou sing a most due tale,
All deeds that we did, we Achæans, and our travail and our bale.
Whether thou wert there amidst it, or hast learned of another one;

But change thou the tale and tell us how the Wooden Horse was done,
E'en him that Epeius fashioned with Athene's help anigh,
The snare that goodly Odysseus brought into the burg on high
Fulfilled with men, that Ilios they might waste with utter bale.
But if aright and in order thou shalt set forth such a tale,
Thereafter among all men will I tell of thee this thing,
How a kind God hath given thee the holy song to sing."

Then Demodocus, moved by the God, began and set forth the lay,
And took up the tale where the Argives, one part, were sailing away,
Having gone on their well-decked ships and given their booths to the flame;
But the others yet were sitting round Odysseus mighty of fame
In the Meeting Stead of the Trojans, all hidden in the Horse,
For the Trojans themselves had drawn it to the topmost burg perforce.
There it stood, and they sitting around it confusèd counsel spake.
Three ways their pleasure sundered, three ways their rede did take;
For some with the pitiless brass would cleave the hollow wood,
And adown the rocks to cast it o'er the burg-brow some deemed good;
And some would give it the Gods, a great gift, an atonement of bale;
And this indeed was the counsel which was doomed in the end to prevail,
For the doom of death was upon them, what time their burg should embrace
A mighty Horse of timber; and there sat in the hollow place
The flower of the Argives bearing to the Troy-folk bale and bane.

Then he sang how the sons of Achæans from the Horse poured forth amain,
And came out from the hollow ambush and wasted all the town,
And in what wise this and that man the burg on high brake down,
While unto Deiphobus' dwelling forthwith did Odysseus fare,
Like unto Ares, and with him Menelaus, Godheads' peer;
And that there he dared the battle and the utmost of the fight,
And prevailed with the help of Athene of the soul that is most of might.

So sang the all-glorious singer, but Odysseus was melted withal,
And over his cheeks the tear-dew from his eyelids 'gan to fall;
And e'en as a wife falls clinging to her mate with wailing sore,
Yea, to him who in front of his city and folk hath fallen in war,
While his burg and his children he warded from the utter hapless day.
And she beholdeth him dying and gasping his life away,
And with shrill wails walloweth on him, and the men behind her smite
Her shoulders and back with the spear-shafts, as they drive her away forth-
To the thraldom where she shall suffer all toil and grief and pain, [right
And with most grievous sorrow her cheeks they waste and wane—
E'en so the woful tear-drops Odysseus poured from his brow.
But from all the rest was it hidden, nor his weeping did they know.
But Alcinoüs perceived it, and knew it, and he alone;
For anigh unto him was he sitting, and he heard his heavy groan.
Then unto those Phæacians the oar-fain thus spake he:

"Hearken, ye lords Phæacian, and ye elders hearken ye!
Now at last let Demodocus cease, and his shrilly harp refrain,
Because of his song meseemeth not all men here are fain.
From the time when we were supping and the Godlike singer began,
Nowhile hath he ceased his moaning, this guest and wandering man.
In a place encompassed of sorrow his heart a dwelling hath had.
Come, then, let us refrain us, that we all alike may be glad,
Both the guest-friend and the guester; for better so it were,
Since because of a guest well cherished did we do all matters here,
The flitting and gifts of friendship that we gave in all goodwill.
Forsooth the place of a brother the suppliant guest shall fill,
For the man whoever so little unto wisdom would attain.
But thou, do thou hide in nowise, by words of crafty gain,
The thing which now I ask thee; for to speak shall better be.
Tell me thy name whereby the father and mother of thee

And all the others called thee, who dwelt in the burg about.
For no man at all of menfolk a name shall be without,
Whether good he be or evil. From the time of his birth, and the day
When on earth his parents brought him, a name on him did they lay.
And thou shalt tell me moreover of thy burg, and thy folk, and thy land,
That our ships in their minds may know it when they bring thee thither to
Because amidst us Phæacians our ships no helmsmen steer, [hand,
Nor with us is any rudder like other ships must bear,
But our keels know the minds of menfolk, and their will they understand,
And of all men's cities are wotting and the fat fields of the land.
And therewith exceeding swiftly o'er the sea-gulf do they go,
In the mist and the cloud-rack hidden; nor ever a fear they know
That any scathe may touch them, or death on any day.
But Nausithoüs, my father, a thing I have heard him say,
For he told how that Poseidon did wrath against us keep,
Because that men all scatheless we flit across the deep;
And one while a ship well-fashioned of Phæacian men shall he wrack,
As over the darkling sea-flood from the flitting she cometh aback,
And shall shadow the city over with a mound and a mighty hill.
In suchwise spake the elder; and these things shall the God fulfil,
Or else refrain from fulfilment, as the heart within him is fain.
But come now and tell me hereof, and speak out the matter plain,
Whither of lands thou hast wandered? to what shores of men thou hast come?
And therewith of the very menfolk and their burgs of the pleasant home,
And of such as are hard and cruel, and unright and wild of mood,
And of such whose minds turn Godward, guest-loving men and good?
And why thou wert grieving inly, and wherefore thou didst wail
When the woe of the Argive Danaans, and of Ilios was the tale?
But this thing the Gods have fashioned, and have spun the Deathful Day
For men, that for men hereafter it might be the tale and the lay.
But did one of thy wedlock kinsmen valiant by Ilios die,

Wife's father, daughter's husband, of such as are most nigh,
After our very kinsmen, our very stock and blood?
Or mayhap some dear companion, a pleasant friend and good?
For no worser than a brother e'en such a man I call,
Who is one's very fellow, and wise of heart withal."

BOOK IX.

ARGUMENT.

ODYSSEUS TELLETH OF HIS WAYFARINGS: HOW HE FOUGHT WITH THE CICONES: HOW HE CAME TO THE LAND OF THE LOTUS-EATERS: HOW HE CAME UNTO THE LAND OF THE CYCLOPS AND OF HIS DEALINGS WITH POLYPHEMUS THERE.

BUT Odysseus of many a rede thereto he answered and said:

"Alcinoüs, lord and king, the people's foremost head,
The song of such a minstrel most good it is to hear,
The man who in speech made tuneful is the very Godheads' peer.
Indeed for me I say it, that no happier time we bide
Than when the folk and all men are held by the merry tide,
And about the house are they feasting, and the singer's song they hear
All sitting along in order, while full boards before them bear [up
The bread and the flesh; and the wine-swain from the mixing-bowl filleth
And beareth forth, and poureth the wine in every cup.
Yea, unto my mind this seemeth a thing most fair to be.
But thy mind hath been turned to ask me of the woful griefs of me,
That with yet heavier heart-grief my woes I may bewail.
But now what first shall I tell thee, what last shall be my tale?
Since the Gods that dwell in the heavens give me such wealth of woe.

"Well, first my name shall I tell you, that ye thereof may know,
And I thereafter 'scaping from the bitter cruel day
To you may give the guest-cheer, though my house be far away.

Odysseus the son of Laertes am I, whom all men heed
For my manifold guile; and my glory to the heavens aloft doth speed.
In Ithaca seen o'er the sea I dwell, and therein is a mound,
E'en Neritos lofty, leaf-shaking; and there in the sea-flood around
Are lying the islands a many, and anigh to each other are these,
As Dulichium and Samé, and Zacynthus of the trees.
Now indeed she lieth lowly, yet the highest up the sea [sun they be.
Toward the dark and the dusk; but the others, toward the east and the
Rugged and rocky she is, but fair nurse of menfolk bold;
Nor know I anything sweeter than that land of ours to behold.
But Calypso, Godheads' Glory, me thencefrom did she hoard
In the hollow rocky places, for she longed for me for lord.
And Ææan Circe the guileful, she hid and hoarded me
In her halls in suchlike manner; for her lord she would have me to be.
But the soul in my breast that lieth thereto they might not win,
For nought to a man is sweeter than his fatherland and his kin,
E'en if he hap to be dwelling 'neath a rich and noble roof,
All in an outland country from his kinsfolk far aloof.
But now of my returning will I tell the troublous tale,
And the woe that Zeus laid on me from Troy-town setting sail.

"The wind from Ilios bore me, and me unto Ismarus drew
Of the Cicones: there the city we sacked, and the men we slew,
And their wives we had from the city and plenteous wealth that was there,
And dealt it about, so that no man of me should lack due share.
And thereupon I bade them wet-foot away to flee,
But the stark fools in their folly they nowise heeded me.
For abundant wine were they drinking; and sheep withal good store,
And knock-kneed shambling oxen were they slaughtering on the shore.
And meanwhile went the Cicones crying to others on their way,
E'en Cicones and their neighbours, but more and better than they,

Up-country dwellers, well wotting of the battle from the steed
Mid menfolk : yet a-warring would they wend afoot at need.
So at dawn were they thick as the leaves are, or the blossoms of the spring,
And the doom of Zeus bode with us, an exceeding evil thing,
That we the evil-fated might bear our woes outright.
So there they arrayed the battle, by the swift ships fought the fight ;
With the cast of the war-spear brazen together did they play.
And as long as it yet was morning, and waxed the holy day,
Although they were many and more, yet we stood and kept them out.
But when to the tide of unyoking the sun had turned him about,
Then the Cicones bore us aback and outfought the Achæan men,
And of every ship six fellows well-greaved died there and then ;
And therewith we fled, we others, from the tide of death and bale.

"Thenceforth with hearts sore grieving yet onward did we sail,
Yet glad from the death escaping which our fellows had foredone.
But verily in nowise did our curving ships pass on
Before for our hapless fellows o'er each aloud we cried,
Who by the Cicones vanquished on the plain of death had died.

"Now Zeus, the Cloud-Pack's Herder, 'gainst our ships a north wind sent,
Falling on with a marvellous whirl-blast, and with clouds he hid and blent
The earth and the sea together, and night fell down from the sky,
And the ships were driven on headlong, and to rags did the sail-cloth fly,
Thrice over and fourfold rended by the storm-blast's very might.
So adown in the ship we stowed them, for we feared to perish outright,
And toward the land a-rowing careful we toiled our way.
There then two days unbroken and two long nights we lay,
And with labour and sorrow mingled our hearts were we eating out ;
But when the fair-tressed Dawning the third day brought about
We set up the masts, and hauling the white sails up to the breeze,

By wind and rudder faring straight on, we sat at ease.

"And now had I come unscathed to my fatherland at the last,
But as I doubled Malea by the seas, and the northern blast,
And the stream, was I staved off thence and past Cythera to stray.
Thenceforth by baleful winds nine days were we borne away
Across the fishy sea-flood; but the tenth day did we meet
The land of the Lotus-eaters, where a flowery food men eat.

"So therewith aland we wended, and drew the water there,
And along by the ships swift-sailing men fell to their dinner-cheer.
But when of meat and of drink we had tasted as was due
Two men I chose from our fellows, and a spokesman I added thereto,
And forth on their ways I sent them that they might learn and tell
What manner of manfolk eating their bread on the land might dwell.
And they, departing, mingled with the Lotus-eaters there;
Who indeed against our fellows devised no evil snare:
But withal they gave unto them to taste of the Lotus meat,
And what man of themsoever of that sweet thing did eat
Had no will to bear back tidings or to get him back again;
But to bide with the Lotus-eaters for ever was he fain,
And to eat the Lotus for ever, and forget his returning day.
So perforce these men sore weeping to the ships I dragged away.
In the hollow ships 'neath the benches these men all bound I laid,
And all our other fellows beloved I straightly bade
To go up on the ships swift-sailing and haste without delay,
Lest some should eat of the Lotus and forget their returning day.
Then aboard straightway they wended and sat on the thwarts alow,
And they smote the grey sea with the oar-blades as they sat along and a-row.

"Then with hearts that were hurt with the evil onward we sailed again,

Till we came to the land of the Cyclops, the overweening men,
The unrighteous: putting their trust in the Gods that ever live,
They plant no plant with their hands, nor afield the plough do they drive,
But all unsown and untilled are all things springing there.
There waxeth the wheat and the barley, and the vine doth her bunches bear
Wine-filled, and from Zeus-bred showers their nourishment they draw;
But with them are no Wise-men Meetings nor giving forth of the law,
But there on the most high mountains they dwell the crags about,
In the hollow dens of the rocks, and each the law gives out
To his own wives and his children, and they heed each other nought.

"Know now, that there lieth an island off the land where we were brought,
And the haven of the Cyclops, betwixt near and far away;
Woody it is, and the wild goats thereon unnumbered play,
For no beaten path of menfolk there is the beasts to scare,
Nor yet do the hunters haunt it who toilsome troubles bear
As they wend their ways through the thickets and toil o'er the hill-tops high:
But neither by herds is it holden, nor beneath the plough doth lie,
And every day of the year unsown it is and untilled,
And void of men; but its pastures by the bleating goats are filled.
For no ships have the folk of the Cyclops with cheeks of cinnabar,
Nor yet among them ever ship-making wrights there are
The well-decked ships to fashion, their business to fulfil,
And to flit them to cities of menfolk; as many a man hath will
To the burgs of other people in ships to cross the sea.
Yet might they fashion that island well-habited to be,
For the land is nothing evil, but would bear all things in tide;
And therein are soft watery meadows adown by the grey sea's side,
And every year unfailing would the vine her increase bear;
And plain is the place for ploughing, and a deep crop every year
Should men harvest in due season, for fat beneath is the soil.

And therein is a handy haven, where nought needeth the mooring toil,
Neither the casting of hawsers, nor making the ship's prow fast,
But to beach the keel and be biding till the will to depart at the last
Egg on the shipman to sailing, and the wind ariseth to blow.
Withal at the head of the haven doth a lovely water flow,
A well coming up from a cavern, and about it the poplars stand.

"So thitherward were we sailing, and some God led us on to the land
Amid the dark of the night-tide and nought could be seen about,
For thick was the mist round the ships, and no moon from the heavens shone
But there as then was she hidden amongst the clouds on high.
So none there was of our fellows who beheld the isle anigh,
Nor saw we the long billows roll on against the land
Before our ships the well-decked were beached upon the strand.
And so when beached were our keels, then all the sails struck we,
And forth from the ships we wended adown on the shore of the sea,
And there we slept and slumbered and the holy Dawn abode.

"But when the Mother of Morning, Rose-fingered Day-dawn, showed,
At the isle we wondered, and traversed about and along it there.
But the Daughters of Zeus the Shielded, the Nymphs now needs must stir
The goats that dwell in the mountains that our folk on their flesh might dine.
So the crooked bows were we taking and the goat-spears long of tyne
From the ships, and therewith our fellows by threes did we array;
And we shot, and the God straight gave us our souls' desire of prey.
Twelve ships my leading followed, and to each did they allot
Nine goats, but for me alone it was ten for my share that I got.
So there daylong we feasted till adown the great sun sank,
And abundant flesh were we eating, and we sat and the sweet wine drank.
For indeed the wine, the ruddy, from our ships lacked not as yet
Since into our pitchers we poured, and good store did each one get

When the holy burg of the Cicons we sacked a while ago.

"So we looked on the land of the Cyclops so near as we were thereto,
And we saw the smoke, and we hearkened men's voices, and goats and [sheep.
But when the sun sank under and dusk did over us creep,
There did we sleep and slumber the salt sea-beach upon.

"But when the Mother of Morning, Rose-fingered Day-dawn, shone,
Then a Meeting of Men I 'stablished, and to all spake out my mind:
'Lo ye, my trusty fellows! do the others stay behind
While I with the ship that I sail in and the shipmen under me
Will go and of these make trial, what manner of men they may be;
Whether they be folk o'erweening, wild men unright of mood,
Or of minds that turn them Godward, guest-loving folk and good.'

"So saying I went a-shipboard, and my fellows furthermore
I bade them go a-shipboard and cast off from the shore.
And straight they went up on the ship, and sat down on the thwarts a-low,
And beat the grey sea with the oar-blades as they sat along and a-row.
But when we came to that country, and hard at hand were we,
We espied on the uttermost bent a cavern anigh to the sea,
High, and with bay-trees covered, and flocks were there good store,
Both sheep and goats a-slumbering; and a great garth furthermore
Was built all round about it, with many a deep-set stone
And many a pine long-shafted, and oaks of lofty crown.
But thereby lay a man most mighty, who all those flocks of sheep
Alone and apart was herding, and no fellowship did keep
With others, and lonely dwelling of no law his mind did deem.
Huge, marvellous was he of fashion; nor like to a man did he seem
Who lives by the eating of bread, but e'en as a crag o'ergrown
With wood, that amidst of the mountains stands stark and all alone.

"So I bade our other fellows, the trusty and the bold,
Down there by the ship to be biding, and watch and ward to hold,
While I with twelve men chosen, the best of those men of mine,
Set forth. And I had a goat-skin of the honey-sweet black wine,
The gift of Maron the son of Euanthes, and priest of the Lord
Apollo, who goeth about his Ismarus to ward.
For the man and his wife and his child had we cherished and held good
In our worship, because he was dwelling in the thicket and the wood
Of Phœbus Apollo; whereby he bestowed on me gifts right great;
For of well-wrought gold he gave me up to seven talents weight;
And he gave me a bowl for mixing all silver, and furthermore
The drink of the Gods, unblended sweet wine, for me did he pour
Into twelve fulfilled pitchers; and thereof did no one know
Of all the thralls and handmaids that about his house did go:
But his wife she knew, and one good-wife that to him was lief and dear.
But when of this honey-sweet wine he would drink, the ruddy clear,
Unto twenty measures of water would he pour one cup to be blent;
And wondrous then was the fragrance from the mixing-bowl that went,
And as then to refrain from drinking had no one nigh been glad.

"So thereof a great goat-skin I bore, and meal in a wallet I had,
For the soul that was great within me that day was deeming aright
That a man should come upon me endued with monstrous might,
A wild man knowing no dooms and no setting forth of the law.

"So swiftly we came to the den, nor him within it we saw,
For his fat flocks was he herding in the pasture-land as then;
So we wended us in, and noted all things about the den.
The baskets were heavy with cheeses, and thronged was every fold
With lambs and with kids, and sorted each kind there did he hold.
Apart there were the firstlings, and apart the mid-born were;

And the younglings apart; and all vessels with whey were swimming there,
The pails and the bowls and all things wherein he milked withal.

"Now thereat my fellows besought me with words, that first of all
We should take of the cheeses and go, and then, if so it should be,
The lambs and the kids from the folds to drive down speedily
To the fleeting ship, and therewith o'er the salt sea-water to sail.
But thereto I did not hearken (or better had been the tale)
Until the man I had looked on and the guest-gift of him won.
Forsooth, he became to my fellows nought lovely to look upon.

"So we kindled a fire and we offered, and ourselves of the cheeses we ate,
And there abiding his coming within the den we sat.
Till at last he came herding his sheep, and a mighty burden withal
He bore; dry wood for the firing, when his supper-time should befal:
So he cast it adown with a clatter withinwards there and then,
And we feared and gat us away to a cranny of the den.
Then into the rocky hollow his fatted flock he drave,
All such as were his milch-beasts, but withoutward did he have
The males, both the rams and the he-goats, the deep-walled garth within.
Then he lifted and set a great door-stone, a monstrous weight to win;
Scarce might waggons two-and-twenty, each one four-wheeled and good,
Have stirred that mass so mighty from the floor whereon it stood;
Such a stone, as high as a mountain, he set in the door of his hall.
Then he sat unto milking his ewes and his bleating goats withal,
Doing all in orderly fashion, and 'neath each her suckling he set.
Then the white milk, half he curdled, and the curds together did get,
And in the wicker presses he laid all that to stand:
But the half he stood in the vessels all ready to his hand,
That thereof he might be drinking when supper-time should be.
But when this work he had speeded and laboured carefully,

Then he kindled a fire and saw us, and began to ask us and say:

"'What are ye then, O strangers? from whence o'er the watery way?
Are ye about some business, or as wantons do ye fare,
As the strong thieves over the waters, who wander here and there,
Of their own souls recking nothing, bearing bale to alien men?'

"So he spake, and the hearts within us were burned up there and then,
For we feared his voice so deep-set, and the man's most monstrous make;
Yet even so with speech-words I answered again and spake:

"'Forsooth we men are Achæans: thrust thwart from Troy are we
O'er the mighty gulf of the sea-flood by all the winds that be,
As homeward we seek: but alien hath our road been and our ways;
For the will of Zeus almighty such weird upon us lays.
We are folk of King Agamemnon, the son of Atreus' name,
Who of all folk under the heavens hath won the fairest fame,
So mighty a burg hath he wasted; such a folk and so many as these
Hath he slain. But we, we are come as suppliants to thy knees,
If some guest-cheer thou wilt make us, or in other wise indeed
Thou wilt give us the gift that of guest folk is the very lawful meed.
But fear thou the Gods, thou most mighty, since we are bedesmen of thee,
And avenger of guests and of bedesmen shall Zeus the Guester be;
And guests that are worthy pity Zeus' help encompasseth.'

"Thus I; but from pitiless heart he answereth thus and saith:
'A fool thou art, O Stranger, if indeed from afar ye fare,
That the Gods thou wouldst have me to worship, and of them to have a fear:
Forsooth of Zeus the Shielded we Cyclops have no heed,
Nor yet of the Gods the Happy: for we are the better at need.
Nor for Zeus' sake and his anger would I spare thee any whit,

Neither thee nor these thy fellows, save my soul were fain of it.
But where left ye your ship well-fashioned, when hitherward ye would go?
By the outermost ness, or near by? Speak out that I may know.'

"So he spake, but his snare to catch me escaped not me that knew;
And in turn in words that were guileful I answered thereunto:
'Poseidon, the Shaker of Earth, brake up our ship with his hand;
For against the crags he cast it at the limits of your land,
When he brought us anigh to the nesses, and the wind from the sea drave on;
But I and these men only the bitter bale did we shun.'

"So I spake, but never an answer from his ruthless mind he made:
But forthwith rushing onward his hands on my fellows he laid,
And clutching two together he dashed them on the ground
Like whelps; and forth flowed the brains and red wet was the earth around.
And then he shredded them limb-meal and both for his supper dight,
And e'en as a hill-bred lion he ate them up outright,
And neither flesh nor inwards, nor marrow-bones left he.
But to Zeus our hands we lifted all weeping wofully,
For all we were helpless and witless when such foul deeds we saw.

"But now whenas the Cyclops had filled his mighty maw,
The flesh of men devouring and of mere milk drinking deep,
Then adown in the den he laid him stretched out amidst his sheep.
Then indeed I fell to counsel with my great heart, whether I [thigh
Should come forth from amidst, and drawing my whetted sword from the
Should thrust through his breast where the midriff the liver doth enfold,
Having groped with my hand: but again the mind did the hand withhold;
For so should all we have perished by sharp and bitter bale,
Because from the lofty doorway our hands might nought avail
To move the mighty door-stone which he thereto had drawn,

So there amid weeping and wailing we bode the Holy Dawn.

"But when the Mother of Morning, Rose-fingered Dawn, shone clear,
Then he kindled up the fire and milked his flocks the fair,
With all things done all duly, and 'neath each her suckling laid.
But when he had toiled and hastened and an end of his work had made,
Then he clutched two more of our fellows and dight them for eating again.
And when his fast he had broken his fat sheep he drave from the den,
The great stone easily stirring, wherewith the door he hid
Once more, as on a quiver one shutteth down the lid.
Loud whooping then the Cyclops turned his fat flock toward the hill,
And there was I left in the rock-den in my heart devising ill,
What wise I might avenge me if Athene my glory should speed,
And unto my heart should be shown what best might be my rede.

"Now a mighty club of the Cyclops against the fold did lie,
Of olive green; he had cut it to bear it when 'twas dry:
So huge, that when we saw it it seemed to us as the mast
Of a broad black ship of burden that oft hath overpassed
The mighty gulf of ocean with twenty oars at play;
So huge about was its bigness, and so far along it lay.
So I drew anigh and of it a fathom's length did I shear,
And gave it unto my fellows that they the same might pare; [end,
And they made it smooth as I bade them, and I came and sharpened the
Which then in the bright hot fire about and about did I wend;
And I stored it up thereafter, mid the dung I hid it then,
Whereof a great abundance was strawed about the den;
And thereafter I bade the others to cast the lot to see
Which one should have heart and daring to raise that bar with me,
And into his eye to bore it when sweet sleep on him should fall.
And the lot chose those four fellows whom I should have chosen of all,

And I for the fifth was chosen with them to do the thing.

"So came the eve, and he with it his fair flocks shepherding
But all the beasts now drave he into the den wide-spread,
Nor without in the garth the deep-walled did he leave one single head,
Whether somewhat he was foreboding or the God so bade him do.
Then withal the mighty door-stone once more to its place he drew,
And so to the milking his milch-ewes and his bleating goats he sat,
And all things done in order, and 'neath each her suckling he gat:
But when he had hastened and done whatso there was to do,
Once more he clutched and dighted for supper another two.

"Now therewith I spake to the Cyclops, and anigh him took my stand,
And black wine in an ivy cup as I stood I held in my hand:
'Since ye eat man's flesh, O Cyclops, now take and drink the wine,
That ye may know what liquor was stored in that ship of mine;
But I bring thee this drink-offering to win thy ruth thereby,
And that hence thou send me homeward, though thou rage so grievously.
O cruel! and how shall any midst all the many men,
Because of thy deeds unrighteous, hereafter seek to thy den?'

"So I spake, and he took it and drank, and became exceeding fain
Of that sweet drink that I gave him, and besought me of drink again:
'Come, give me the drink and be blythe, and straightway tell me thy name,
That a guest-gift I may give thee to gladden thine heart with the same,
Since verily for the Cyclops the corn-kind earth doth shed
The wine in plenteous bunches by the rain of Zeus full-fed:
But this indeed is handsel of the meat and drink divine.'

"So he spake, and again I gave him of the dark-red glowing wine,
And thrice I bore and gave it, and the fool thrice drank it out.

But when the heart of the Cyclops the wine had encompassed about
Then honied words I uttered, and to speaking thus befel :
'Cyclops, my name renownèd thou askest, the which I will tell,
But the guest-gift thou wouldst give me, now give me it me I pray.
My name is Noman : Noman they called me on a day,
My father and my mother, and all my folk of old.'

"So I spake, but straight he answered from cruel heart and cold :
'Noman shall I eat the latest of all his fellows here,
And all the others before him ; lo, a guest-gift good and dear !'

"Therewith he fell a backward, and there he lay along,
His thick neck wryed and twisted, and Sleep, the tamer strong,
Held him, and forth from his gullet gushed wine with man's flesh blent,
And with the wine all heavy a belching forth he sent.
So then mid the plenteous ashes the olive bar I laid
Until all warm it was waxen, and words to my fellows I said,
And heartened them all, lest any should fear and shrink away.

"But now when the spar of olive in the fire as there it lay
'Gan kindle for all its greenness, and brightly glowed the wood,
I fetched it up from the fire, and about my fellows stood,
And a stark and mighty courage the God on us did send ;
And they took up the shaft of olive, sharp-pointed at the end,
And into his eye they thrust it, while I, raised up aloft,
Kept turning, e'en as a craftsman the ship-beam boreth oft
With the wimble, and on both sides his men still ply the thong
To each side fixed and steady, and it runneth around for long ;
E'en so that shaft fire-hardened we took, and the eye of him
We bored, and about it glowing straightway the blood 'gan swim,
And his eyelid and his eyebrow were singed with the breath that came

From the burning ball as the eye-roots all cracked in the heat of the flame:
As when the smith of an hatchet or great axe taketh hold
And dippeth it, hissing loudly, amidst the water cold,
For its tempering; since thus only and thereby the steel is good—
So hissed the eye of the Cyclops around the olive wood.
But his mighty yells were fearful, and the den rang horribly,
Till we shrank away in terror. Then he tore from out his eye
The shaft of sharpened olive all dabbled about with blood,
And raging, aloof he cast it with his hands from where he stood.

"Then he whooped out loud to the Cyclops, they who on either side,
Amid the rocky places of the windy bents abide;
And they heard his cry, and flocking from about there did they stand
Around the den, and were asking what harm was come to hand:
'Polyphemus, what thing grieves thee, that through the deathless night
Thou criest aloud, and hast made us but sleepless folk outright?
Is some one of mortals driving thy flocks against thy will?
Or thyself is some man quelling with might or crafty skill?'

"But the stark strong Polyphemus thus answered them again:
'O friends, Noman me slayeth by guile and not by main!'

"Then with wingèd words they bespake him, and answered presently:
'If alone thou art abiding and no man enforceth thee,
The ill that great Zeus sendeth, no wight may shun the thing.
But put up the prayer to thy father, Poseidon the mighty king.'

"And with that word they departed, and my dear heart laughed aloud
At my name that had so beguiled him and my worthy rede and proud.
But now the Cyclops, lamenting and moaning very sore,
With his hands went groping about him and took the stone from the door,

And set himself down in the doorway, and stretched his hands about
To take a hold on any with the sheep a-coming out;
For his heart that hope was conceiving, such a fool he accounted me.

"But I for my part took counsel how best the thing might be,
And if some loosing from death for myself and my folk I might find;
And guile and counsel divers therewith did I weave and wind
Concerning our very life-days, since so nigh at hand was the ill—
And so at last to my deeming this seemed the best rede still:
Thick-fleeced were the rams of the sheep-kind, well fed and great and fair,
And dark was the wool and heavy that on them they did bear.
Hushed then I bound them together with withes that for twining were good
That were strawed for the Cyclops' bed-place, the monstrous, unrighteous of mood.
Threesome I knit them, in suchwise that each midmost bore a man,
And the two on each side going safe-hiding for him wan,
And each three a man were bearing: but for me I took a hold
Of a certain ram, the goodliest of all the flock and fold.
Him round the reins was I clutching; 'neath his shaggy belly twined
I lay, and my hand-grip tightly in his fair fleece did I wind
And held on stoutly, keeping enduring heart alway.

"Thus then we abode in sorrow the holy dawn of day,
But when the Mother of Morning, Rose-fingered Day-Dawn, shone,
Then all the rams of the cattle fared out to the field to begone,
While the ewes unmilked and bleating about the folds must go,
For their udders were swollen to bursting. But their King, all worn with woe,
With his hand was ever groping the backs of all the sheep
As they stood up there before him; but the fool no heed did keep
How under the breasts of the fleecy-fair sheep were bound the men.
But the last of the flock, the ram, came forth from the door of the den,

With his plenteous wool encumbered, and with me and my wily thought;
So to him spake the stark Polyphemus, as a hold of him he caught:

" 'Dear ram, why then I prithee of the flock art thou the last
To come forth from the den? aforetime ne'er left behind thou wast,
But first of all to be cropping the tender flower of the grass,
Still striding big; and foremost to the river wouldst thou pass.
And, first of all wert thou yearning in the eventide to hie
To the fold: but now art thou latest. Is it so that thou mournest the eye
Of thy Master, which he the losel a while ago did blind
With his miserable fellows, when with wine he had vanquished my mind?
That Noman, who, I swear it, hath not yet 'scaped his bane.
Oh, if but as me thou wert minded, and a voice of speech mightest gain
To tell me where in the wide-world the man my might doth shun,
Then here and there o'er the rock-den his blood and brains should run
As against the ground I dashed him, and some solace should I have
For all the heap of evil which the nought-worth Noman gave.'

"So saying, away without doors the ram from his hand he sent,
And a little way from the rock-den and the garth thereof we went;
And then first from the ram I loosed me, and my fellows presently,
And swiftly the flock long-striding, the fat afield drave we,
Oft looking around behind us, till adown by the ship we were.

"Then we from the death escaping were dear to our fellows dear;
But for those the rest that had perished lamenting would they have made.
But that I would not suffer, but with frowns each man forbade
To weep, but charged them swiftly the fair-fleeced flock to hale
Aboard, for they were many, and o'er the brine to sail.
So straight aboard they gat them and sat on the thwarts alow,
And beat the grey sea with the oar-blades as they sat along and a-row.

"But when we had made such offing as thence a shout might be heard
I put forth unto the Cyclops a hard heart-cutting word:
'O Cyclops, of no weakling devouredst thou the men
With thy starkness overweening amidst thy rocky den!
Thou cruel! now henceforward on hard days shalt thou fall,
Since thou wouldst be eating guestfolk within thine house and hall.
And now shall Zeus avenge us and the other Gods therefor.'

"So I spake; and the heart within him was angered more and more,
And the head of a mighty rock-mound he wrenched and hurled and threw,
And a little way he cast it before the prow dark-blue,
And the deep of the sea was opened by the downfall of the stone.
Then back unto the mainland the indraught drave us on,
And the flood fell on from the deep sea and drave us nigh the land.
But therewith a pole long-handled I caught up in my hand
And thrust off, bidding my fellows, and egging them amain
To lie hard upon the oar-hefts that we might 'scape our bane,
Wagging my head upon them; and each stretched out over the oar.

"But when twice the space of salt sea we had made from off the shore,
Then again would I cry on the Cyclops; but my fellows all about,
With wheedling speech on all sides, would be letting me to shout.

"'O rash one! Why then wilt thou the wild man's anger stir?
Whose bolt e'en now hurled seaward drave on our ship anear
Once more unto the mainland, till we deemed we there must die;
For now should he hear one shouting, or a voice as we go by,
Our skulls and our stout ship's timbers he would crush together at last,
By hurling a ragged rock-stone; so stark and far doth he cast!'

"So they spake, but the mighty soul within me nowise bent;

And again from my soul all-wrathful backward a voice I sent :
'O Cyclops, now if any of the men that live to die
Shall ask thee who so foully hath blinded thee thine eye,
Thou shalt say that it came of Odysseus, the City-waster's deed,
Who dwells in the Ithacan homestead, the old Laertes' seed.'

"So I spake, but he groaned as he answered, and a word to meward cast:
'Out, out! How the old foretelling comes home to me at last!
Here dwelt a certain seer, a great and a glorious one,
Who excelled in all foretelling, e'en Telemus, Eurymus' son,
And foretelling amidst of the Cyclops hereby grew old and grey.
But he told me how all these matters should come to pass on a day,
And how I, by the hand of Odysseus, should be reft of my sight and my eye.
But ever was I looking to see some man draw nigh
Who was big and fair of body, and in stark strength mightily clad;
And lo! 'tis a man that is little, a weakling worthless and bad,
Who hath blinded me of my eyesight and overcome me by wine.
But come thou hither, Odysseus, till I give thee that guest-gift of thine,
And beseech the great Earth-shaker to give thee speed o'er the sea:
For I am his child and his offspring, and my father he boasts him to be.
And he, if he so pleaseth, shall make me whole of mine eye,
And none else of the happy Gods, or of men on the earth that die.'

"So he spake; but again I answered, and sent this word on the air:
'O would that I as surely might strip thee waste and bare
Of thy life and soul, and send thee adown to Hades' Hall,
As not e'en the great Earth-shaker shall heal thine eye at all!'

"So I spake; but to King Poseidon he sent the prayer and the word,
As unto the starry heavens he cast his hands abroad:
'Hear me, Dark-haired Poseidon, thou Girdle of the Earth!

If thou callest thyself my father, and thine I am of birth,
Grant that Odysseus the Burg-bane, Laertes' son, e'en he,
The man of the Ithacan homestead, his home may never see!
Or if, indeed, he be fated his kin and his friends to behold,
And to come to his house high-builded and the land of his fathers of old,
Then bare of all his fellows, late and loathly may he come,
In the ship of another people to find bale alive at home!'

"In suchwise spake he praying, and the Dark-haired hearkened his prayer;
And withal a stone far greater he raised aloft in air,
And whirled around and cast it, and put forth his measureless might,
And astern of our ship the black-bowed adown in the sea did it light;
And but little it lacked but the outmost of the helm it lighted on,
And the sea and the deep lay open with the downfal of the stone.
But the swell our ship bore onward and drave on toward the other land.

"So when we came to the island where the rest of the ships of our band,
The well-decked keels, were gathered, and round about the same
There sat our sorrowing fellows, abiding till we came,
Then thither our ship we wended and beached her on the sand,
And we ourselves went off her and on to the salt-sea strand.
And therewith the flock of the Cyclops from the hollow ship we drew,
And so dealt them about that no man of me might lack his due.
But there my well-greaved fellows the ram gave unto me,
As mine own from out the sharing; and him, by the side of the sea,
Unto Zeus the son of Cronos, Black-cloudy, All-folks' King,
We offered, burning the buttocks: who took not the offering,
But rather was he devising how the bane of one and all,
The well-decked ships and my fellows the faithful might befal.

"So daylong there were we sitting till the going down of the sun,

On the plenteous flesh-meat feasting and sweet wine for every one.
But when the sun sank under and dark night upon us crept,
Then there, on the strand of the deep sea, we laid us down and slept;
But when the Mother of Morning, Rose-fingered Day-dawn, shone,
Then I my fellows stirring straight bade and egged them on,
To get them aboard and be loosing the hawsers from the prow.
So aboard they gat them straightway and sat down on the benches alow,
And beat the grey sea with the oar-blades as they sat along and a-row.

"But the bale to our hearts was clinging as forth we sailed and on,
Glad from the death escaping which our fellows had undone."

BOOK X.

ARGUMENT.

ODYSSEUS COMETH TO ÆOLUS, WHO GIVETH HIM A FAIR WIND, WHEREBY HE IS BORNE CLOSE TO ITHACA, BUT BY THE FOLLY OF HIS FOLK IS DRIVEN BACK THENCE TO ÆOLUS AGAIN: THENCE HE COMETH TO THE LÆSTRYGONS, AND BY THEM LOSETH THE MORE PART OF HIS SHIPS AND MEN: SAILING THENCE THEY COME TO ÆÆA, WHERE DWELT CIRCE, WHOSE SORCERY IS TOLD OF, AND HOW ODYSSEUS DWELT WITH HER A WHOLE YEAR, WHEN SHE BADE HIM GO VISIT THE LAND OF THE DEAD BEFORE HE SET OUT FOR HOME AGAIN.

SO we came to the isle Æolian, where Æolus doth dwell,
E'en Hippotas' son, of the Deathless, the Gods, belovèd well;
In a floating isle he dwelleth, and all about it there
Is a brazen wall unbroken, and the cliff goeth up to it sheer.
But twelve children born of his body abide in his house and hall,
And six thereof are daughters and six lusty sons and tall;
And unto his sons in wedlock his daughters did he give;
And beside their father belovèd and their mother dear they live
In endless feast: and by them ten thousand dainties lie.
And up from the house sweet-steaming daylong goes forth the cry
All round the garth; but a-night-tide amid the carpets deep
And on the well-joined bedsteads by their shamefast wives they sleep.

"So unto their burg we hied us and their high-house builded well,
And me month-long there he cherished, and all tales would have me tell
Of the Argive ships and of Ilios, and the Achæans' journey home.

And in order due I told him whatwise the thing had come.
And when for the road I asked him, and speeding of him prayed,
In nowise he gainsaid me, but good speed for me arrayed:
For he gave me a wallet new flayed from a bull, a nine-year-old,
And all ways of the blustering winds therein did he bind and hold,
For the Son of Cronos had made him the master of the wind,
To lull the blasts or to raise them according to his mind.
So adown in the great ship's hollow with a thong had he bound it about,
All silver-bright, that no littlest of the blast might breathe thereout;
And therewith the breeze of the South-west he sent along to blow,
To waft on us and our ship-host. Yet nowise wrought it so;
For by our own stark folly were all we folk undone.

"Nine days and nights thereafter thenceforward sailed we on,
And with the tenth day's dawning showed the acres of our land,
Till we saw men lighting the beacons, so nigh we were at hand.
But on me, outworn and wearied, sweet sleep and slumber came
As I held the sheet; for never to my folk gave I the same,
That we the swiftlier speeding our fatherland might make.
Then my fellows took up the word, and each to other spake,
For they deemed that home I was bringing great store of silver and gold
By the great-heart Æolus given, son of Hippotas of old;
And thus would one be saying as he looked on his fellow anear:

"'Gods! how is this man honoured, and by all men holden dear,
To whoseso land and city he cometh on a day!
And withal from Troy-town's treasure great wealth he bore away:
While we who with him have wandered and worn the self-same road,
Here come we empty-handed back to our old abode:
And again for his love and his honour hath Æolus given him this.
But come now, let us hasten and see what treasure it is,

What wealth of gold and silver within the bag doth lie.'

"So the evil rede of my fellows there won the victory;
For they opened the bag, and from out it forth every wind did sweep,
And the whirl-blast caught us and drave us lamenting o'er the deep,
Away from the land of our fathers. Then I awoke withal,
And within my heart the blameless twifold the thought did fall,
Whether casting myself from a-shipboard I should die there down in the sea,
Or abide the thing in silence, and yet mid the living to be.
So I bore and abode, and hidden adown in the ship I lay.
But the ships by an evil whirl-blast of the wind were borne away,
And back to the isle Æolian; and our folk bewailed them sore.

"There then upon earth we gat us, and drew water on the shore,
And the shipmen gat to their victuals by the ships' side fair and fleet;
But thereafter when they had tasted of the drink and of the meat
Then I chose me out a herald, and one with him to go
To Æolus' house the glorious; and when we came thereto,
Still feasting by his helpmate and his children him we found.
So we went to the house and sat us 'twixt the doorposts on the ground,
And their souls were filled with wonder, and they asked how it might be.

"How comest thou here, Odysseus? What ill-God grieveth thee?
Since in heedful wise we sped thee, that thou at last might'st gain
Thy fatherland and thine homestead, if therefor thine heart were fain.'

"So they spake, and thereto I answered, though needs my heart must wail:
'Tis the scathe of evil fellows, and idle slumber's bale.
But now, O friends, do ye heal it, as ye have might to do.'

"So I spake, and with words soft-spoken besought them thereunto;

But the others sat in silence, while a word did their father give:
'Begone in haste from the island, thou wretch amongst all that live!
For unrighteous it were to cherish or speed upon his way
Such a man as thou, so hated by the Gods of the happy day.
Begone! since unto the Deathless thou art so loathed a thing.'

"And with that word he sent me from the house sore sorrowing.
So there we sailed right onward with hearts oppressed with woe,
And outworn were the souls of the shipmen with the toilsome need to row,
For all our vain endeavour; since no speeding wind there came.

"Six days our way we wended, by day and night the same,
But we made the burg on the seventh of Lamos builded high,
Wide compassed, Læstrygonian; where herd to herd doth cry
As he wendeth afield, and his fellow thence coming him doth hear.
And forsooth a twofold hire might the sleepless win him there,
And one spell the neat be herding, and one the sheep-kind white;
For there anigh to each other are the ways of day and of night.

"So we came unto the haven, a fair and glorious one,
Where a rock-wall high, unbroken, all round about is done;
And sheer out-thrusting nesses each other hold in face
At the mouth thereof, and narrow is the entry of the place.

"Therein laid all the others their ships the curved and fair,
And in the hollow haven close-set they moored them there.
For thereinto no billow from the outer sea might fall,
Nay neither great nor little; white calm was over all.
But I alone of all men my black ship held without,
To a rock of the outer crag-wall my hawser binding about.
Then up to a peak I gat me, a craggy place and high,

And no tillage of neat or of manfolk from thence could I espy:
Nay, nought but smoke proceeding from under the earth could I see.
So I chose out two of our fellows, and a third their herald to be,
And sent them as our forerunners, that they might ask and heed
What men these were of menfolk on the earth's face eating bread.

"So they went and fared on a highway whereby the wains come down
That fetch from the lofty mountains the timber toward the town;
And they came upon a damsel drawing water nigh the gate,
Of Antiphates the Læstrygon the daughter fair and great.
For unto the well Artacia fair-flowing had she come down,
Whence folk were wont to be drawing the water for the town;
So coming nigh unto her they asked her of the thing
What man was lord among them, and who o'er the folk was king.
So her father's dwelling she showed them, the house high-roofed and fair.
And they came to that glorious dwelling and found a woman there,
Huge, high as the tops of the mountains; and they loathed her utterly.
Then straight she called from the market her lord and brought him anigh,
Antiphates the mighty, who devised them woeful bane;
For he snatched up one and arrayed him as meat for his dinner's gain.
But his fellows fled from before him, and gat to the ships and the sea.
Then the king sent his cry through the city, and they heard him presently,
Those Læstrygons the mighty, and flockmeal came they then
From all around, unnumbered, more giant-like than men;
And stones each one a man-load from the rocks they cast on those.
And the clamour and cry of evil from around the ship-host rose,
And the sound of men a-dying with the crashing ships was blent,
As with men like fishes spitted to their loathly feast they went.

"But while within the haven and the deep place these did die,
I pulled forth the whetted edges, and drew the sword from my thigh,

And therewith I sheared the hawser of my ship of the prow dark-blue,
And bade my fellows hasten, and egged them on to do,
And lay out over the oar-hefts that we might 'scape the bane.
So they their death-day dreading cast the salt-sea up amain,
And fain was I, as seaward to the deep from the rock-wall sheer
My ship fled: for the ship-host, the others, perished there.

"Forth then we sailed and onward, our hearts with evil worn,
Yet fain of the flight from the death-day; of our fellows all forlorn.
But we came to the isle Ææa, where the fair-tressed Circe dwells,
And she the awful Goddess in man-speech talks and tells.
But the very sister is she of Æætes fell and wise,
For they both of the Sun were begotten that lighteth all men's eyes
From one mother, and she was Persé, the maid that Ocean gat.

"So we made the shore in our keel, and in silence came thereat,
And into the ship-fast haven, and some God led the way.
Then on the dry land going two days and nights we lay,
Eating our hearts with labour and the burden of our ill.
But when the fair-tressed Dawning the third day did fulfil
Then, taking my spear of battle and my sword the sharp and keen,
Straight up from the ship I wended to a place whence the land might be seen
If perchance I might see men's tillage or the voice of men might hear;
So a rocky height I clambered, and I stood on the topmost there,
And saw the reek uprising from the wide-wayed earth below,
As up from the house of Circe through the thicket did it go.
Therewith I fell to pondering, in my heart and in my mind,
If where the dark reek I was seeing I should go to seek and find.
But as I thought it over it seemed the better to me
That first aback I should hie me to the swift ship and the sea,
To give my mates their supper and send them forth to espy.

"But as my ways I wended, and the curved ship drew anigh,
Then one of the Gods had pity on me the wender apart;
For across my path he sent me a huge high-antlered hart,
Who had come to drink of the river adown from his woodland mead,
For the might of the high sun's burning compelled him with its need.
Then him as he went from the water amidst the back I smote [out,
By the spine; and the spear brass-headed passed through and through and
And he cried, and his soul went from him as he fell in the dust of the ground.
And therewith did I set foot on him, and drew out the spear from the wound,
And the spear, on the earth I laid it and let it be thereby,
While I plucked me twigs and withies and twined them evenly
Into a rope well twisted throughout, a fathom long,
Wherewith I bound together the feet of the beast the strong;
Which thus on my neck a-laying to the black ship did I flit
As I steadied myself with my spear-shaft; for I might not shoulder it,
And with one hand hold it on me; for it was a mighty deer.
So I cast him adown by the ship-side, and my fellows did I stir
With words that were soft and pleasant, by each one standing anigh:

"'Not yet, O friends, shall we wend us for all our misery
Adown to the House of Hades till the fateful day befal;
So while in our ship the speedy there is meat and drink for all
Of victual be we heedful, lest our lives with hunger wear.'

"So I said, and straight they heeded what I bespake them there,
And with all their heads uncovered on the shore of the untilled sea
On the hart they looked and wondered, for a mighty deer was he;
But when their eyes they had pleasured with looking on the beast
They washed their hands and arrayed them to hold a noble feast.
So there all day were we sitting, till the sun went nigh to sink,
To eat of the flesh unfailing and of honied wine to drink.

But when the sun sank under and the night upon us crept,
Then there on the side of the salt-sea we laid us down and slept.

"But when the Mother of Morning, Rose-fingered Dawn, shone bright,
I arrayed the Meeting of Menfolk, and to all I spake outright:
'Hearken, O friends and fellows, who bear such weight of woe!
Of the place of the Dark and the Dawning no longer now we know,
Nor where the Sun man-lighting beneath the earth doth sink,
Nor where he riseth upward: so let us be speedy to think,
If yet there be aught of counsel, as I believe is none.
For I climbed to a craggy hill-top and looked on the isle adown,
And saw that the limitless sea-flood begirdled it all about,
And all plain it lay: but mine eyes beheld the reek rise out
From the woodland and the thicket amidmost of it there.'

"So I spake, but now all broken were their hearts beloved and dear,
When of that Antiphates' doings, the Læstrygon, they thought; [wrought;
And the rage of the stark man-eater, and the deeds which the Cyclops
And plenteous tears were they weeping and loud lament they made,
Though nought availed their weeping, nor might their mourning aid.

"Then my well-greaved fellows I numbered into two companies,
And a leader I appointed to be o'er each of these;
And I led the one, and the other godlike Eurylochus led.
Then in a brazen helmet the shuffled lots we sped,
And therefrom the lot of Eurylochus the great of heart did go.
So he went his ways, and with him were fellows twenty and two;
And they wept as they went and left us, and sorrow sore we made.

"Now they came on the house of Circe well builded down in a glade,
And all of smooth stone fashioned in a place seen far and near:

And about it were wolves of the mountain, and lions haunted there;
And she herself had tamed them with the help of herbs of ill:
Nor fell they upon our fellows, though they thronged about them still,
But fawning there upon them their long tails wagged withal.
And as dogs will fawn on their master when he comes from the feastful hall,
Because he is wont to bring them things that their hearts deem good,
Round these the wolves the strong-clawed, and the lions fawning stood,
And they feared when they beheld them, the creatures fierce and great.

"But there was the house of the Goddess, and there they stood in the gate,
And Circe heard they singing in a lovely voice within,
As she wove on the web undying, such works as the Godfolk win,
Such works as are all-glorious, and delicate and fair.

"Then the chief of men, Polites, bespake his fellows there,
A man who to me was dearest, and the heedfullest of all:
'O friends, there is some wight weaving a great web there in the hall,
And singing so fair that the pavement is echoing all about.
A goddess or a woman? but to her let us haste to cry out.'

"So he spake, and they cried aloud, and their voices toward her cast,
And she, straight coming outwards, through the shining doorway passed,
And called them, and they followed, so witless was their mood;
But Eurylochus dreaded treason, and without the door abode.
So she led them in and set them on bench and lordly seat,
And a mess of cheese, and meal and honey pale and sweet
With Pramnian wine she mingled; and she blended therewithal
Ill herbs, that the land of their fathers might clean from their memories fall.
But when she had given thereof, and they had drunk of the wine,
With a staff she smote them, and shut them within the sty of the swine;
And swine-shape they had, and the voice and the bristles and head of the
[boar;

But ever their minds abided e'en such as they were before.
So there were they styed up weeping, and Circe presently
Cast to them mast, and acorns, and nuts of the cornel tree,
Whereof the swine earth-wallowing are wont to make their meat.

"But aback Eurylochus hastened to the ship black-wrought and fleet,
To tell tidings of his fellows and their unseemly doom;
But though for speech he was striving yet never a word would come,
So sore his heart was smitten; and his eyes with tears were filled,
And nought but lamentation the soul within him willed.
But when all we in wonder were asking of his tale,
Then at last of our other fellows he told the woe and the bale.
'We wended, O noble Odysseus, the way whereas ye bade,
And came on a house through the thicket fair builded in a glade,
Of polished wall-stones fashioned in a place seen far and near;
Where a great web one was weaving and singing shrilly-clear;
A goddess or a woman? So aloud on her we cried,
And through the doorway gleaming straightway to us she hied,
And called us; and they followed because of their witless mind,
But treason I foreboded, and abided there behind.
And all they vanished together; nor ever any one
Came back again, though a long while I sat and watched alone.'

"So he spake; but the great blade brazen o'er my shoulders did I throw,
Yea, my war-sword silver-hilted, and about me did my bow.
And I bade him straightly lead me by the way he went with these:
But he caught ahold upon me, and clung to both my knees,
And amidst of lamentation sent wingèd words to me.
'Nay, drive me not unwilling, Zeus-bred! here let me be!
For I know that neither thou shalt come back, nor bring back one
Of our fellows. Nay, but with these that are here let us swiftly begone

And flee; if yet mayhappen we may 'scape our evil day.'

"So he spake: but thereto I answered and spake to him straightway:
'Eurylochus, thou if thou willest shalt here in thy place abide,
And here be eating and drinking by the black ship's hollow side;
But for me, now am I departing for stark need is weighing on me.'

"So I spake, and my ways I wended from the ship-side and the sea;
But when through the holy glades I now was drawing anigh
The mighty house of Circe, who of herbs hath mastery,
Lo, the God of the Golden Wand, e'en Hermes, met me there,
As toward the house I wended, as a young man shapen fair
When first his beard is sprouting in the loveliest tide of youth;
Then he took my hand and named me, and spake a word of sooth:

"'Whither away, unlucky, dost thou wander through the wold,
Unwotting of the country? while Circe's house doth hold
Thy fellows in their swine-shape, and in stark lairs there they lie.
And comest thou hither to loose them? then thereof thus say I,
That for thee shall be no returning but there with the rest shalt thou bide.
And yet from these ills shall I loose thee, and save thee on this tide.
Lo, here a herb full crafty! take this when thou comest thy way
Unto Circe's house, and its might shall stave off thine evil day.
But now shall I tell thee of Circe and the baleful guile she shall win,
For a potion shall she mix thee, and shall cast the venom therein,
But shall not avail to bewitch thee because of the herb of might
Which now I give unto thee; and all things shall I show thee aright.
For whenas Circe would smite thee with a staff exceeding long,
Then from thy thigh be drawing thy sword the sharp and strong,
And fall upon her fiercely as though thou wouldst have her to die,
Then shall she cower before thee and bid thee with her to lie;

And then shalt thou in nowise the bed of the Goddess gainsay,
So that she may loose thy fellows, and speed thee on thy way.
But the oath of the happy Gods, the Great Oath, shalt thou bid her to take,
That nothing more of evil against thee she shall wake,
Lest she make thee naked of might, a foul and unmanned thing.'

"So spake the Bane of Argus, and forth the herb did he bring,
Having dug it up out of the earth; and he showed me its make and its might;
And black was the root thereof, but the blossom milky white;
And Moly the Godfolk call it: hard is it for men that die
To dig it out, but all things can the Gods do easily.
And therewith from that woody island went Hermes on his road
Unto the long Olympus, but I went to Circe's abode;
And many things o'ershadowed my heart as I wended there.

"So I stayed me in the doorway of the Maid of the well-tressed hair,
And I stood and cried out loudly, and the Goddess heard, and straight
She gat her out and toward me, and came through the gleaming gate,
And called me, and I followed with the grief my heart did bear.

"So she brought me in and set me in a silver-studded chair,
In fashion fair adornèd, and a footstool under my feet;
Then a drink in a golden beaker for me did she mingle and mete,
And into the cup cast venom, devising evil sore.
Yet when I had taken and drunken, it bewitched me none the more;
So then with her staff she smote me, and spake unto me and said,
'Thou, too, to the sty betake thee! with thy fellows make thy bed!'

"So she spake; but my sword keen-whetted I drew forth from my thigh,
And fell therewith on Circe, as though I would have her to die;
And she shrieked and ran under my hands and caught me about my knees,

And therewith upon me fawning, spake such wingèd words as these :

"'What man art thou? of what kindred, of what city comest thou?
For I marvel that drinking this venom thou art nought enchanted now;
Since never hath any other borne my venom ere to-day, [way.
When once he hath drunk, and the drink by the tooth-hedge hath taken its
Then proof against all witchcraft is the heart that thy bosom doth hold.
Yea, art thou that shifty Odysseus, whom the Lord of the Staff of Gold,
The Argus-bane, would tell of? the man who should come, said he,
From Troy-town wending homeward in his swift black ship o'er the sea?
But set thou thy sword in the scabbard! and then how well if we went,
We twain, in one bed together! and thereafter we being blent
In love and friendly pleasure shall trust each other well.'

"She spake, and thereto I answered and said such words to tell:
'O Circe, how wilt thou bid me to be kind and courteous
When thou hast turned my fellows into swine within thine house?
And for me, thou hast holden me here, and in thy craftihead
Thou biddest me to thy chamber and to go up into thy bed,
That thou may'st strip me of manhood and make me vile and base.
Nay, never with my goodwill shall I go to thy bed and thy place,
Unless thou hast heart, O Goddess, by the Oath of all avail
To swear that from henceforward thou devisest me no bale.'

"So I spake, and straight she swore it e'en as I bade her do;
And so when that was accomplished, and the oath made steadfast and true,
Then up to the bed of Circe, the lovely bed, I went.

"But meanwhile in the halls the handmaids on service were intent,
E'en the four who are ever serving about that house and home;
And their race is of the well-springs, of the grassy groves they come,

And of the holy rivers that toward the sea flow down.
And now one of these was casting fair cloths on chair and throne,
And above she laid the purple, and beneath the linen fair;
And one the silver table drew forth before the chair,
And thereon fell to setting the baskets golden-wrought;
And the third in a bowl of silver blent wine that lulleth thought,
Sweet wine, and around was dealing the golden cups and fair:
But the fourth bore in the water and kindled much fire there,
Beneath a mighty caldron, till warm the water was.
And when it came to the boiling within the gleaming brass,
In the bath she put me and bathed me, and from the caldron led
Warm water softly tempered o'er my shoulders and my head,
And the weariness took from my body that the soul within me wore.
And so when she had washed me, and with oil had sleeked me o'er,
She set a kirtle upon me, and a cloak full fine and fair,
And led me in and set me in the silver-studded chair,
Well wrought with all adornment, and a stool beneath my feet;
And hand-water brought the damsel in a golden ewer meet,
And into a silver basin over my hands she poured,
And there beside moreover arrayed the polished board.
And therewith a reverend woman bore in the bread for me,
And stayed me with such dainties as happened there to be.

"So there to the meat she bade me, which nought my mind deemed good,
For of other things had I deeming, and on evil did I brood.
But Circe when she beheld it, that I sat and none the more
Reached out my hand to the victuals, but abode in sorrow sore,
Came nigh and stood beside me and wingèd words did flit:

"'How cometh it, Odysseus, that as one dumb ye sit
Eating thine heart, nor dealing with the meat and drink that is here?

Forebodest thou some evil? Nay, thereof thou need'st not fear;
For I have sworn to refrain me by the mighty Oath of dread!'

"In this wise she bespake me, but I answered her and said:
'O Circe, where is the man that in righteous wise would think,
Who would have the heart to be tasting of any meat and drink
Ere he had loosed his fellows and beheld them with his eyes?
But if unto meat and to drink thou biddest in kindly wise,
Loose them, that I with mine eyen may look on my fellows dear.'

So I spake, but forth from the guest-hall therewith did Circe fare,
Bearing her staff in her hand; and she opened the swine-sty door
And drave them out, each one in the shape of a nine-years' boar;
And there they stood before her, and she went amidst them there,
And with another venom each man thereof did she smear,
And down from their limbs fell the bristles that erewhile the venom had bred,
The baleful herb they had taken at the hand of Circe the dread;
And men again were they gotten, yet younger than afore,
And fairer folk to look on, and mightier and more.
So therewithal they knew me, and they took my hand each man,
And on them fell the wistful weeping, and the sound of their wailing ran
Through the house and the hall, and the Goddess she pitied us, e'en she.
And therewith that Godhead's Glory drew nigh and spake to me:

"'O Zeus-bred son of Laertes, Odysseus of many a shift,
Get thee down to the side of the sea-flood, and thy ship the fair and swift,
And the first thing beach thy ship on the firm land high and dry,
And stow your wealth in the rock-dens, and there let the tackling lie,
Then wend thou homeward hither, and all thy folk with thee.'

"So she spake, and thereto I hearkened and the noble soul in me.

And I went my ways to the ship and the side of the salt-sea flood.
And there on the ship I found them, my fellows trusty and good,
Sore grieving, pouring the tear-drops most plenteous on the ground.
And as when the calves of the meadows together play and bound
About the herded kine as full-fed of grass withal
They come aback to the midden, and stayed no more by the stall,
The calves run round their mothers still lowing ceaselessly,
So when their eyes beheld me, weeping they thronged on me,
And even so to my deeming did the minds within them fare,
As though they were come to their country and in the city were
Of Ithaca the craggy, where they were born and bred,
And fain midst lamentation these wingèd words they said:

"'We are fain of thy coming, Zeus-nourished, as though we were verily [come
Unto Ithaca our country, and the ancient fathers' home.
But come now, tell us the story of our fellows' bale and bane.'

"So they spake; but sweet and softly I answered them again:
'Our ship now first of all things let us haul up high and dry,
And lay up our gear in the rock-dens and our tackling lay thereby;
Then I bid you all together to wend along with me,
That in Circe's holy homestead your fellows ye may see
All fain, and eating and drinking, for endless store have they.'

"So I spake, and the words of my bidding in nought did they gainsay,
Save that Eurylochus only the rest was hindering.
And thus he spake unto them and set these words on the wing:
'Out, hapless! whither wend we? for what a bale ye yearn
That we go to the house of Circe, who all us shall change and turn
Into swine, or into wolf shapes, or lions of the wold,
Over her house the mighty enforcèd watch to hold.

E'en such were the deeds of the Cyclops, when our folk awhile ago
Came amidst his garth, and with them did o'erbold Odysseus go,
And by that one man's folly the others perished there.'

"So he spake, and awhile I pondered in what wise I should fare,
Whether, drawing my edgy long-sword from beside my sturdy thigh,
I should smite the head from off him adown in the dust to lie,
Though anigh we were of kindred. But my fellows all about
With honied words withheld me, to let my wrath die out.
'O Zeus-bred, leave we this man, if so thou willest it,
Beside the ship abiding and in guard thereof to sit,
But us do thou lead to Circe and her holy house and hall.'

"So they spake, and up from the sea and the ship they wended withal.
Nor yet was Eurylochus left by the hollow ship to abide,
For he dreaded my awful anger, and after us he hied.

"But meanwhile our other fellows did Circe bathe with care,
And with soft oil sleeked them over within her house the fair,
And thick cloaks and goodly kirtles did on them therewithal,
And we found them at the banquet within her feasting-hall.
But when these beheld each other, and thought o'er all the tale,
They mourned and wept together that the house rang with their wail,
And therewith that Godhead's Glory drew near to me and said:

"'Odysseus, thou the wily, Laertes' son Zeus-bred,
No more awake new wailing; for I myself, I know,
How on the sea fish-haunted ye bore a weight of woe;
And how on the land the foemen have wrought you bale and pine;
But eat your meat I bid you, fall to upon the wine,
Until within your bosoms such hardy heart shall grow

As wherewith the land of your fathers ye left a while ago,
E'en Ithaca the craggy. For your wanderings wide ye brood.
Downcast ye are and withered, nor ever of your mood
Gladsome ye are and merry, since ye bear this weight of woe.'

"She spake, and our noble spirits consented thereunto.
And there day on day we abided till the year fulfilled her round
On unfailing flesh we feasted; sweet wine did there abound:
But when it now was a year, and the seasons came about,
And the long days were accomplished by the months a dying out,
Then my trusty fellows called me, and spake to me and said:

"'Lord, wilt thou not bethink thee of the land where thou wast bred,
If of thee hath the doom been spoken that thou be saved to come
To thine house the steadfast-builded and the ancient fathers' home?'

"So my noble soul was consenting to what they would have done.
There all day long were we sitting till the going down of the sun,
Upon the flesh unfailing and the sweet wine feasting well;
But when the sun sank under, and the night upon us fell,
Then about the shadowy halls were they bedded here and there.
But I went up unto Circe and the bed exceeding fair,
And by her knees I besought her, and my prayer the Goddess heard,
As speaking there before her I uttered a winged word:

"'O Circe, now fulfil it thy word of the day bygone,
To speed me home; for my soul to departing now eggeth me on,
And the hearts of these my fellows who about me wail and cry,
Wearing the soul within me when thou art not anigh.'

"So I spake; but that Godhead's Glory thus answered to my need:
'O many-wiled Odysseus, Zeus-bred Laertes' seed!
In this my house unwilling shall ye bide for no long day,
But first another road must ye wear, and wend your way
Unto the house of Hades and dread Persephone,
To seek aid of the ghost of the Theban Tiresias, even he,
The blind-eyed, the foreseer, whose steadfast mind bides still;
Unto whom, though dead he abideth, Persephone giveth will,
And alone to have understanding, while the rest as shadows flit.'

"I hearkened her speech and my heart brake down at the weight of it.
There I sat on the bed a-weeping, and all my desire was done
To live my life-days longer and look on the light of the sun;
Till, satiate now of weeping and wallowing on the bed,
I spake a word unto Circe, and answered her and said:

"'O Circe, and what helmsman for my wayfare shall I get?
For to Hades never shipman hath sped the black ship yet.'

"I spake; but the Godhead's Glory thus answered thereupon:
'Odysseus very shifty, Zeus-bred Laertes' son,
Have thou no care nor longing for one thy ship to guide,
Step the mast, and the white sails spread ye, and sit ye there beside,
And the breath of the wind of the Northward shall waft thee on thy way.
But when through the stream of Ocean thy ship hath passed on a day,
There then is Persephone's Grove in the long deserted land
Where the tall black poplars flourish and the fruitless willows stand.
There by deep-eddying Ocean haul up upon the bank,
And go thy ways unto Hades and his dwelling dark and dank,
Where the stream of Flaming Fire into Grief-River goes,

And the Water of the Wailing, a rill that from Hate-flood flows.
And thereby is a rock and the meeting of two roaring rivers wide;
Draw up thereto, O hero, and e'en as I bid thee abide.
There then a pit shalt thou dig of a cubit endlong and o'er,
And thereby the due drink-offerings to all the dead shalt thou pour.
The first of mingled honey, of sweet wine the second one,
The third of very water, and the white meal sprinkled thereon.
Then utter thou thy praying to the mightless heads of the dead,
And vow that to Ithaca coming thou wilt slay in the halls of thy stead
A barren heifer most goodly, and heaped wealth on the fire wilt lay;
But unto that Tiresias apart and alone wilt slay
A sheep of black unspeckled, of all thy flock most fair.
But when the great race of the Dead thou hast worshipped with thy prayer,
Then a black ram shalt thou offer, and a black ewe shalt thou slay,
To the Nether Dusk turning their heads; and thyself turn thou away,
And about to the streams of the river. Then many a ghost shall come
Of the dead that have departed and left the earthly home.
There then shalt thou egg on thy fellows, and bid them to bring it to pass,
That the sheep that there are lying dead-slain by the pitiless brass
They flay and burn, and be calling with prayer on the Gods of the Dead,
On Hades the almighty and Persephone the dread;
And thou shalt sit with thy sword sharp-whetted drawn from thy thigh,
To refrain the unmighty heads of the dead from drawing anigh
To the blood-pit, ere thou beholdest Tiresias the seer.
Soon then, O Prince of the People, shall the wizard draw anear,
And he of thy way shall tell thee, and the measure of thy road,
Whereby o'er the fishy sea-flood thou shalt reach thine own abode.'

"So she spake, and the gold-throned Day-dawn therewith was come at last,
And she did a kirtle on me and a cloak about me cast;

And the Goddess did upon her a wide gown shining white,
And delicate and lovely, and about her loins she dight
A fair and golden girdle, and a veil upon her head.

"But I egged on all my fellows throughout the house and stead,
And by each man stood and bespoke him with soothing words and meet:
'No longer now be sleeping nor sigh out slumber sweet,
But come your ways as Circe the worshipped giveth rede.'
So I spake, and their noble souls gainsayed not but gave heed.

"But not e'en so all scatheless my folk away did I bring;
There was one Elpenor, the youngest; not best in everything,
In war not over-mighty, nor of understanding strong:
Now apart from all his fellows must he needs be lying along,
Aloft on the house of Circe, wine-heavy, seeking fresh air;
But whenas the tramp and the clatter of men stirring he did hear
He leapt up hasty and hurried, and had no thought at all
To get him adown and aback by the way of the ladders tall, [brake,
But right down from the roof he tumbled, and his neck from the backbone
And his soul to the house of Hades the downward way must take.

"But unto my folk now gathered a word I spake and said:
'Ye think to be wending homeward to the land that your fathers bred;
But to us a new wayfaring hath Circe showed, and we
Must wend to the House of Hades and dread Persephone,
To seek us aid of the Theban Tiresias the Seer.'

"So I spake, but all down-broken were their hearts the lieve and dear,
And they sat and moaned in their places and their very hair they tore:
Albeit all their mourning it helped them none the more.

" But while we went in our sorrow to the swift ship and the sea,
And tear on tear as we wended dripped down unceasingly,
That while had Circe got her adown to the black ship's side,
And a ram of the sheep and a ewe all black thereby had she tied,
And lightly unseen went by us ; for what man's eyes may see
A God that is loth to be looked on, whether here or there he be ?"

BOOK XI.

ARGUMENT.

ODYSSEUS FARETH BEYOND THE OCEAN-STREAM AND COMETH TO THE REALM AND HOUSE OF HADES, AND THERE HATH COUNSEL OF TIRESIAS THE THEBAN: THERE ALSO HE SEETH THE GHOST OF ELPENOR, BUT LATE DEAD, AND THE GHOST OF HIS MOTHER, AND OF MANY MEN AND WOMEN OF RENOWN.

SO when adown we were gotten to the ship's side and the shore,
Then into the holy salt-sea we thrust her down once more,
And in the black ship hoisted the sail upon the mast.
And the sheep we gat aboard her, and aboard we also passed
Sore sorrowing, pouring the tear-drops swift-following each on each.
But the fair-haired Circe beworshipped, the Goddess of the speech,
For us had thought behind us and our black-prowed ship to send
The following breeze sail-filling, a goodly faring-friend.

"So we, when all the tackling about the ship we had dight,
Sat still, while wind and rudder bore on the keel aright,
And the sails of our seafarer were filled with the wind all day:
But now the sun sank under and dusk on all roads lay,
And at last unto the utmost of deep Ocean-stream we came,
Where is the folk Cimmerian and the city of their name,
By the mist and the cloud-rack covered, and never on a day
On them doth the sun bright-shining look down with his many a ray;
Nay, not when the starry heaven he climbeth aloft, nor when
From the heavens again he turneth to the Earth and the lands of men,

But over those men unhappy hangs night for ever dead.

"There then our ship did we beach, and the sheep therefrom we led,
And along the shores of Ocean ourselves the way did we hold,
Till we came to the land and the country whereof had Circe told,
Then the beasts Perimedes held and Eurylochus thereto;
But for me the sword sharp-grinded from beside my thigh I drew,
And thereby a pit I dug me, a cubit endlong and o'er,
And drink-offerings round about it to all the dead did I pour:
The first of mingled honey, of sweet wine the second one,
And the third of very water, and white meal I sprinkled thereon;
And many things was I praying to the heads of the mightless dead.
And I vowed that to Ithaca coming I would slay in the halls of my stead
A barren heifer most goodly, and heaped wealth on the fire would lay;
But unto the seer Tiresias alone and apart would I slay
A sheep all black, of my sheep-flocks the flower and fairest head.
But when with vows and beseeching I had worshipped the folks of the dead
We took the sheep thereafter, and cut their throats o'er the pit,
And the black blood flowed thereinto: then they gathered unto it;
All the ghosts of the dead departed from the Nether Dusk 'gan fare.
And brides there were and younglings, and burdened elders there,
And there were tender maidens still bearing newborn woe,
And many a man death-smitten by the brazen spear did go,
The very prey of Ares, yet clad in blood-stained gear;
And all the throng kept flitting round the pit from here and there
With strange and awful crying, till pale fear fell on me.
So therewith I bade my fellows, and urged them eagerly [flay,
That the sheep that lay there slaughtered by the pitiless brass they should
And make them a burnt-offering, and so to the Gods to pray;
Unto Hades the almighty and the dread Persephone.
But for me the whetted sword I drew from the thigh of me,

And sat to refrain the heads of the dead men lacking might
From drawing anigh to the blood-pit ere Tiresias came in sight.

"But the first that drew anigh me was our friend Elpenor's shade,
For as yet he was not buried beneath the Earth wide-wayed;
We had left his body unburied, unwept, in Circe's hall,
Since other need and labour on our fellowship did fall.
So I wept when I beheld him and was sorry for his sake,
And I sent my voice unto him and a wingèd word I spake:

"'How camest thou, Elpenor, beneath the dusk and the dark?'
And swifter afoot hast thou wended than I in my coal-black bark.'

"I spake; but he midst groaning thus answered me the word:
'O Zeus-bred son of Laertes, Odysseus wise-heart lord,
God's doom and wine unstinted on me the bane hath brought.
I lay on the house of Circe, and waking had no thought
To get me aback and adown by the way of the ladders tall:
But downright from the roof I tumbled, and brake my neck withal
From the backbone, and unto Hades and his house my soul must fare.
But I pray thee, by those whom we left and are no longer here,
By thy wife, by thy father who bred thee when thou wert but a little one,
Yea, by Telemachus also, whom thou left'st in thine house alone,
Whereas I know that, going from Hades' House in a while,
Thou wilt stay thy ship the well-wrought at that Ææan isle;
There then, O King, I pray thee, have me, e'en me, in mind,
Nor go home, and all unburied, unwept, leave me behind,
Lest the anger of the Godfolk for thee I come to breed.
But I pray thee there to burn me in all my battle-weed,
And on the sea-side hoary to heap the howe for me,
A token of me the hapless to those who yet shall be.

All this for me accomplish, and set up mine oar on the howe,
Wherewith when I lived with my fellows I once was wont to row.'

" So he said, and thereto I answered and unto him I spake:
'Yea, all these things, O luckless, will I compass for thy sake.'

" But yet while there we were sitting and holding woeful speech,
Still all the while o'er the blood-pit my sword-point must I reach,
While the image of my fellow spake on from the other side.

" Then came the soul of my mother that awhile agone had died,
Anticleia, erst the daughter of Autolycus high of heart,
Whom I left behind yet living when to Troy I did depart.
And now I beheld her weeping in the pity of my mood,
And yet must I refrain her from drawing near the blood,
For all my thronging sorrow, till Tiresias I should see.
But at last came the soul of the Theban Tiresias, and he
Held the golden staff; and he knew me, and thus his speech did speed:

" 'O Zeus-bred son of Laertes, Odysseus of many a rede,
Why comest thou, unlucky, from the light of the very sun,
To look on the joyless country and the dead men all undone?
Now draw away from the blood-pit and hold off thy whetted sword
That I of the blood having drunken may tell thee a soothfast word.'

" So he spake, and the silver-adornèd sharp sword I drew aback
And thrust it into the scabbard, and he drank of the blood-pit black;
And when he had drunken, forthright to me spake the blameless seer:

"O famed Odysseus, thou askest of thine home-fare sweet and dear;
Yet the Gods shall make it troublous: for I deem that it shall not be

That thou may'st shun Earth-shaker, who hath stored up wrath for thee,
Because his son beloved thou didst blind a while ago.
Yet home shalt thou come in the ending, though worn with the weight of
If thou wilt refrain the desire of thee and thy company [thy woe,
When down in thy ship well-fashioned at last thou drawest anigh
Unto the Three-horned Island, as ye flit o'er the darkling deep
And find the neat a-feeding and flocks of the fatted sheep
Of the Sun that beholdeth all things, and every deed doth hear.
If then of your home ye are mindful and leave them scatheless there,
Then, then despite of troubles, your Ithaca yet shall ye gain; 111
But and if in aught ye scathe them, I foretell the utter bane
Of thy ship and all thy fellows, and if thou the death dost shun,
Late and evil shall be thy homefare, thy fellowship all gone,
On the keel of an outland people; and in thine house nought good
Shalt thou find, but men o'erweening eating up thy livelihood,
Wooing thy wife the godlike and proffering the gifts of the bride. [pride.
Well, there shalt thou come and shalt wreak thee of their mastery and their
And when the bane of the Wooers in thine halls thou hast brought to pass,
Whether by wiles, or in face of the day with the whetted brass, 120
Then go thy ways, and bearing thy shapen oar with thee
Fare forth till thou com'st to a folk that wot not of the sea,
And blend no salt with their victuals, nor thereof ever seek;
And nothing are they knowing of the ships of the crimson cheek,
Or of the oars well-fashioned, the very wings of the ship.
And hereof a manifest token, which thy heed shall never slip:
When on thy way thou meetest another wayfaring man,
Who saith that thy noble shoulder is bearing a winnowing fan,
There then the oar that thou bearest set steadfast in the earth,
And to King Poseidon hallow fair gifts and great of worth, 130
A ram and a bull to wit, and a boar the mate of the sow;
Then home do thou wend, and the gifts an hundredfold do thou

Unto the Gods undying of the widespread heavenly home,
And all in the utmost order. Then thy death from the sea shall come
Exceeding mild and gentle, and thereby shalt thou fade out
By eld smooth-creeping wasted; and the people round about
Shall be grown all blithe and happy: lo, a soothfast word have I said.'

"So he spake; but I spake unto him, and this answer thereto made:
'Tiresias, this is the doom that the very Gods have spun:
But tell me now of a matter, speak clearly thereupon;
I behold the soul of my mother, this one departed and dead,
Who in silence sits by the blood-pit, and dares not for her dread
To look on the face of her son, or a word to him to say:
O King, how then may she know me for the man I am today?'

"So I spake, but in turn he bespake me and this answer did he speed:
'Yea, lightly the word will I tell thee, and teach thy mind a rede:
Whichever of these departed thou shalt suffer to draw anigh
And taste of the blood, shall tell thee all things in verity;
But back again must he get him to whom thou grudgest the thing.'

"And therewithal the spirit of Tiresias the King
Went into the House of Hades, having told foretelling true.
But there I abided steadfast till anigh my mother drew
And drank the black blood of the blood-pit; then she knew my face,
And amidst of lamentation these wingèd words 'gan say: [straightway,

"'O child, how camest thou living to the shadowy land of night?
For 'tis hard for living people of such things to have a sight;
For amidst are mighty rivers and fearful floods are there,
And first the stream of Ocean, o'er which afoot none fare,
None save in a ship well-fashioned to flit him o'er the tide.

And dost thou hie thee hither from Troy-town wandering wide,
A long while, with thy ships and thy fellows? Or in Ithaca hast thou been?
And in the halls of thine homestead thy wife hast thou not seen?'

"She spake the word, and straightway this answer did I speed:
'To the House of Hades, O mother, am I driven by my need
To seek of the ghost of the Theban Tiresias the seer;
For that Achæan country I have not drawn anear,
Nor set foot on the land that is mine; but have wandered wide with my woe
Since first with Agamemnon the holy did I go
Unto Ilios the horseland 'gainst the men of Troy to fight.
But give me a word of one thing, and tell me the tale aright,
What doom of Death o'ercame thee that layeth men along?
Was it the lingering sickness, or did Artemis shaft-strong
Fall on thee for thy slaying with her gentle bolts and kind?
Yea, tell me too of my father, and the son I left behind.
Bides my lordship yet amongst them, or hath some man taken it o'er,
Some alien? Are they saying that I return no more?
And I bid thee tell me the counsel and the mind of my wife bewooed;
Bides she still with my child, and steadfast yet guardeth all my good?
Or her doth some Achæan, the best of the people, wed?'

"So I spake, and thereto my mother beworshipped answered and said:

"'Yea, surely she abideth, and a hardy heart doth bear
Within the halls of thine homestead; but all nights doth she wear
In grief and in lamentation, and through all days doth pine.
Nay, no man holdeth thine honour, but on those fields of thine
In peace Telemachus dwelleth, and meted feasts doth he share,
Whereof it is due that a man, a dealer of dooms, should have care,
For thereto do all men bid him. But afield doth thy father abide

Nor ever wendeth him townward, nor hath he any tide
Bedstead and bedding and blankets or rugs wrought fine and sleek,
But a-winter he sleeps in the feast-hall whereto the thrall-folk seek,
Adown in the ash by the fire, and in sorry raiment is clad;
But when the summer cometh with harvest rich and glad,
Then about his vineyard's fatness where the mother of wine doth abound,
And down on the leaves new-fallen, are his beds spread out on the ground.
And there in sorrow he lieth and eketh his heart-grief sore,
In his longings for thy homefare, and eld hath him more and more
And in such wise I too perished, and e'en so to mine end I came.
For neither on me in the homestead fell the Shaft-glad Eager-of-aim,
Nor with her kindly arrows my body did she slay;
Nor came the sickness upon me to drive the soul away
From the limbs that erst it quickened, with woeful waste and pine;
But the longing for thee, Odysseus, and those glorious redes of thine,
And the longing for thy kindness reft the sweet life from me.'

"She spake, and my mind clung round it and longed that it might be
That I might take in my arms that soul of my mother dead;
And thrice did I essay it, and my heart my longing sped,
And thrice from my arms as a shadow or a very dream did she flit,
And waxed the biting sorrow in my heart because of it;
And therewith my voice I uttered and a wingèd word I spake:

"'Why bidest thou not, my mother, when thee I fain would take,
That with dear arms laid on each other, e'en here in Hades' Hold,
We twain might have fill of sorrow and lamentation cold?
Doth Persephone the mighty thrust on some image here,
That with yet heavier mourning my life-days I may wear?'

"So spake I; but my mother thus spake and answered again:

" 'O me, my child, my darling, most hapless man of men,
Persephone, daughter of Zeus, beguileth thee nought hereby,
But this is the lot of mortals when at last they come to die;
For no longer then the sinews hold together flesh and bone,
But they by the might of the fire bright-flaming are undone,
When first from the white bones wendeth the soul and the living breath,
And the soul as a dream forth flieth and flitting hovereth.
But thou, get thee back at thy swiftest to the light; but note thou well
All this, that thereof hereafter the tale to thy wife thou may'st tell.'

" But as we spake and answered came a throng of women there,
Whom Persephone the mighty had bidden forth to fare;
E'en such as were wives and daughters of mighty men and strong,
And about the dark-red blood-pit there gathered they their throng.
So therewith I fell to thinking how of each I might have the tale;
And this seemed to me the counsel that was of most avail,
To draw my edgy long-sword from beside my sturdy thigh
And refrain them from drinking the blood all in one company,
But in turn should each be drinking, and in turn should each one fall
To tell of her race and her kindred; for so should I hear of all.

" And so first I looked on Tyro, and well-begotten was she,
For of Salmoneus the blameless she boasted her to be;
And withal the wife of Cretheus, who was Æolus' own son.
Now Enipeus the holy river she had set her heart upon,
The fairest of all waters adown the Earth that flow,
And along by his streams most lovely the maid was wont to go.
But the Girdle of Earth, the Earth-shaker, beheld her on a day
And with her by the mouth of the river and its eddying streams he lay,
While the dark-blue wave stood around them arched over mountains high,
And hid the God and the Woman whereas the twain did lie.

But he loosed her maiden girdle and sleep on her did speed.
But when the God had fulfilled it, and done the lovesome deed,
Then he took her hand in his hand and spake and named her out:
'Rejoice in my love, O woman! When the year hath come about
Two noble sons shalt thou bear, for indeed the deathless lie
In no fruitless beds: so my seed shalt thou cherish heedfully.
Go now to thine house, and forbear thee and say no word of the thing,
For, behold, I am Poseidon, the Earth-shaker, the King.'

"Then under the wavy deep he dived adown once more.
But she conceived, and Neleus and Pelias she bore,
And stout servants of Zeus the mighty grew up those brothers twain.
And Pelias dwelt sheep-wealthy in Iolchos' spreading plain,
But Neleus abode in Pylos that is sandy evermore.
But children gotten by Cretheus that Queen of women bore
Æson to wit, and Pheres, and Amythaon of the car.

"Next came Asopus' daughter, Antiope from afar,
Who boasted her that one while in the arms of Zeus she had lain,
And Amphion thence and Zethus had born, his children twain;
Who first built up and settled Thebes of the gates sevenfold,
And did it about with towers, since not e'en they might hold
The wide Thebes bare and towerless, though strong were they in strife.

"There too I saw Alcmene, who had been Amphitryon's wife,
Who Heracles the hardy, the lion-heart, did bear;
For she lay in the arms of Zeus, and in love was mingled there.
And of Megara, daughter of Creon the high-souled, had I sight,
Whom the son of Amphitryon wedded, the ever unmarred of his might.

"And I saw there Œdipus' mother, hight Epicaste the fair,

E'en she that with mind unwitting did a dreadful deed and drear;
For she wedded her son; and he, when his father he had slain,
Did wed her; and unto manfolk all this did the Gods make plain.
He then his sorrows bearing in Thebes' most lovely home
Ruled over the Cadmeans by the dread Gods' awful doom;
But she went to the House of Hades, strong warden of the gate:
Having fastened a dizzy neck-noose to a beam high up and great,
There she in her sorrow was holden: but for him she left indeed
All woes that a mother's wreakers to dreadful end may speed.

"And Chloris I saw most lovely, whom Neleus on a day
Must wed for her very beauty, and boundless gifts must pay;
And she was the youngest daughter of Amphion, Iasus' son,
Who o'er Minyan Orchomenos by might the lordship won;
And she was Queen in Pylos and bore a noble race,
As Cromius and Nestor, and Periclymenus great of grace,
And thereto the glorious Pero, the wonder of all that live,
Whom all men around were wooing. Her Neleus would not give
Save to him who the shambling bulls broad-faced of Iphicles
Should drive from Phylace's garth; and hard to drive were these.
But one man pledged him to drive them, the blameless seer was he;
But the doom of the deathless Gods it bound him bitterly,
And hard bonds bound him withal, and the wasteland neatherds bound.
But when done at last were the months of the year that runneth around,
And all the days were fulfilled and the seasons came about,
Then Iphicles the mighty loosed him to tell them out,
Those Dooms of his foretelling, and the rede of Zeus was done.

"And fair Leda there I beheld, the wife that Tyndareus won,
And to Tyndareus the strong-souled two children did she bear:
Polydeuces good at the fist-play and the horse-lord Castor they were.

They living, by Earth are covered, that quickeneth everything,
Yet 'neath the earth in all honour are they holden by Zeus the King.
But the day of their living shifteth and they live and die in turn,
But all days all honour and worship e'en like to the Gods they earn.

"Then saw I Iphimedeia, Aloëus wife was she;
And she said she had lain and mingled with Poseidon of the sea,
And bore two men; but for life days o'er short on Earth they came;
E'en Otus the great, and godlike Ephialtes wide of fame:
But those twain were the biggest bodies that the corn-kind Earth hath bred,
And the fairest of all men, saving Orion's goodlihead;
For when nine years they were waxen, nine cubits length outright
Was the measure of their bigness, and nine fathoms was their height,
And the very Gods undying they threatened at the last
That the din of headstrong battle midst Olympus they would cast;
And Ossa on Olympus, and on Ossa Pelion's head
Leaf-shaking would they tumble, to climb up the heavenly stead.
Had they reached their manhood's measure no lesser had they done.
But the Child of Zeus, he slew them, the fair-haired Leto's Son,
Ere yet upon their faces the cheek-down blossomed fair,
Ere their cheeks were covered over with the flower-tide of hair.

"Phædra I saw, and Procris, and Ariadne the May,
The daughter of Minos the wise, whom Theseus bore away
From the isle of Crete to the acres of Athens' holy land.
But of her he had no joyance, for she died by Artemis' hand
In Dia the sea-begirdled, for the tale Dionysus had nursed.

"There were Mæra and Clymene there, and Eriphyle accursed,
Who took a price for her husband, and gat the treasured gold.

"But of all I cannot be telling, nor by me may the names be told
Of the many wives of the heroes and their daughters that I saw,
Ere the deathless night be waning. And now anigh doth it draw
To the sleep-tide; whether I wend me to the ship and my fellows there
Or here I sleep. But ye people and the Gods of my speeding shall care."

He spake, but they held their peace and kept silence one and all,
For the tale's enchantment held them throughout the shadowy hall.
But to them white-armed Arete took up the word and spake:

"How deem ye, O Phæacians, of this man and of his make,
Of the bigness of his body, and his mind like-wrought within?
My guest he is, and yet honour of him doth each man win.
Then haste not his departure, and no stinting let there be
To such a man, so needy; for plenteous wealth have we
That lieth by Gods' kindness in many a house and stead."

Then Echineus the hero, the elder, spake and said,
E'en he who was born the oldest of all Phæacian men:
"O friends, our Queen the prudent that word she speeded then
Not far from the mark of our minds: so hearken ye and heed.
But hereof unto Alcinoüs belongeth the word and the deed."

But therewith to him Alcinoüs his answer thus did give:
"Yea, thus indeed shall the word go, if yet a king alive
I rule o'er the folk Phæacian, and the men that love the oar.
Let the guest awhile be abiding, though he long for his homefare sore,
To tarry at least for the morrow, that the gift I may fulfill.
And verily of thy speeding shall all men heed them still;
And I above all: for of me mid the folk is the kingship and might."

Then therewith Odysseus the wily thus answering spake outright:
"O Lord and King Alcinoüs, of all the folk most dear,
And if thou would'st bid me to tarry for yet another year
While my homefare ye were speeding with gifts of price for me,
Thereto would I be consenting; and more gainful would it be
That I came to the land of my fathers, and I with the fuller hand.
For before all men more awful, and better beloved should I stand,
E'en they who beheld me returning to the Ithacan isle and my stead."

So therewithal amidst them Alcinoüs spake and said:
"Odysseus, nought do we deem thee, as we behold thee there,
To be a cheat and a thief, for as many as such men fare
All wide about in the world, on the black earth pasturing,
And lie unto lie still piecing, till none may see through the thing.
But thy words are fair and fashioned, and thy mind is good and strong,
And as one well learned thou tellest, in the manner of a song,
The weary woe of the Argives, and the woeful toil of thee.
But come now, tell me of one thing, and tell it openly,
If thou sawest there thy fellows the godlike and the great,
Who with thee to Ilios wended, and by Troy-town met their fate.
For long is unspeakable night-tide, nor yet doth the hour need
That we get us to sleep in the feast-hall; so tell on of the wondrous deed,
For I would abide the morning, the holy, might'st thou bear
In this hall of thy woes to be telling, and the toil that thee did wear."

But now the wily Odysseus thereunto answered and said:
"O Lord and King Alcinoüs, the people's foremost head,
Time is for words abundant, and time for sleep maybe;
But if thou art fain of hearkening I would not grudge it thee
To tell thee yet of tidings more grievous than this tale;
Yea, the woe of those my fellows who fell beneath the bale,

E'en they who escaped the Trojans and the cry of the battle strife,
But died in their returning through the lust of an evil wife.

"When Persephone the holy had scattered through the place,
All wide about on each side, those souls of the woman's race,
There came a soul sore grieving, Agamemnon, Atreus' son;
And about him were there gathered all those that death had won
Within the house of Ægisthus and met their doom in the hall.

"So when the black blood he had drunken he knew me therewithal,
And he fell to wailing shrilly, and plenteous tears 'gan pour,
And stretched his hand out toward me, for he longed to reach me sore;
But gone was his strength the steadfast, and his might was faded out
That once was so abounding in his limbs the lithe and stout.
Then my soul was sorry for him, and I gazed on him with tears,
And therewith I bespake him and winged a word for his ears:

"'Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon king of men,
What doom of death man-strewing hath overcome thee then?
And was it that Poseidon in thy ships did thee undo
With the wind-drift stirred against thee, and the whirl-blast laden with woe?
Or was it the bale of the foemen on the firm land on a day
As their neat and the lovely flocks of their sheep thou wert driving away?
Or warredst thou for a city and the women of a stead?'

"So I spake, and thereon straightway he answered me and said:
'O many-wiled Odysseus, Zeus-bred Laertes' son,
Nought by the King Poseidon in my ships was I undone,
By the stir of the furious winds and the woe-beladen gale;
Nor did the folk of the foemen on the dry land bear me bale,
But rather it was Ægisthus, with my evil wife to aid,

That death and doom devised me. For me to his house he bade,
And there at the feast he slew me, as ye slaughter an ox in the stall,
And I died by a death most piteous; and my fellows one and all
They slew there without pity, as the swine, the tuskèd white,
They slay in the house of the wealthy, the man of exceeding might,
It may be at the glorious banquet, or the wedding, or the gild.
Now the slaughter of many a man hast thou happed on, who were spilled
Where man the man withstandeth, or in battle stark and strong;
Yet this hadst thou most lamented, the murder and the wrong.
For there about the wine-bowls and the tables full of food
We lay in the hall together, and all the floor ran blood.
And most piteous, close beside me I heard Cassandra's wail,
The daughter of King Priam, slain by that forge of bale,
Clytemnestra; then from the earth my dying hands did I raise
And cast them about my sword hilt. But the shameless went on her ways,
Nor had she the heart, as I wended adown to Hades' House,
To shut mine eyes with her fingers, or the mouth for me to close.
—Nought more shameless or more fearful than a woman may ye find
When she at last conceiveth such deeds within her mind.
E'en such a deed so unseemly as she imagined for me,
To murder her wedded husband! And I deemed it was to be,
That with welcome of my children and my house-thralls I should win
The way unto my homestead. But she, well-learned in sin,
Hath cast shame upon all women that are upon the earth,
And all to come hereafter, yea e'en on those of worth.'

"He spake; and thus I answered, and thus I fell to speak:
'Woe's me! how Zeus farseeing doth wondrous evil wreak
Upon the House of Atreus, and all for woman's will,
Yea from of old! how many for Helen death did spill!
And for thee, lo Clytemnestra, and the snare for the far away!'

"So I spake; but straight he answered, and suchlike words did say:
'So now with thy wife I bid thee, be not too gentle now;
Nor yet the uttermost tell her of the thing that thou dost know,
But somewhat shalt thou tell her, and somewhat hide withal;
Yet not from thy wife, Odysseus, shall murder on thee fall.
For in exceeding prudence and heart-wisdom learned is she,
The daughter of Icarius, all-wise Penelope.
We left her not long wedded when we went away to the war,
And her child a speechless infant on her breast as yet she bore,
Who happy belike now sitteth amid men when their number is told.
And I deem that his father belovèd shall come, and his face shall behold,
And he shall embrace his father as is but meet and right.
But me my bedfellow hindered that my eyes should be full of the sight
Of my son: for ere I beheld him my very self did she slay.
But this one thing will I tell thee, which unto thy breast do thou lay,
Thy ship do thou bring unto land by stealth and nought openly;
For now from henceforth in women no troth or trust shall be.
But come now and tell me of this, and let thine answer be clear,
If of my son yet living on earth ye chance to hear,
In Orchomenos it may be, or in Pylos of the sand,
Or in Menelaüs' dwelling in Sparta's wide-spread land?
For indeed the noble Orestes from the earth not yet hath died.'

"So he spake; but I spake unto him and answered on my side:
'Why ask ye of this, Atreides? thereof I have no skill,
Whether he liveth or dieth, and windy words are ill.'

"But while thus giving and taking in woeful words we stood,
And poured down plenteous teardrops in the sorrow of our mood,
Drew near the ghost of Achilles, the son of Peleus of old,
And therewith the soul of Patroclus, and Antilochus the bold,

And Ajax, who of his body was the best and fairest one
Of all the Danaan menfolk, save the glorious Peleus' son.
Straight then the spirit knew me of the swift-foot Æacus' seed,
And amidst of lamentation this wingèd word did he speed:

"'O many-wiled Odysseus, Zeus-bred Laertes' son!
O rash man! why hast thou thought on deeds more than all yet done,
And hast dared to come to Hades where dwell the witless dead,
The images of menfolk whom Death from Earth hath sped?'

"So he spake; but him I answered and thuswise spake again:
'Achilles, son of Peleus, far best of Achæan men,
I came for Tiresias' counsel; if he had aught to say
How to Ithaca the craggy I yet might win my way.
For not yet the land Achæan have I made, nor yet as now
Have set foot on my land; but ever am ill-sped. Nay, but thou
Wert aforetime far the happiest of men, and yet shall be;
For e'en as the Gods in thy lifedays we Argives honoured thee;
And here in thy might abiding of the dead men art thou King.
Be not woe of thy death, Achilles, nor make sorrow for the thing.'

"So I spake: but a word he uttered, and thuswise answered he:
'And thou, O famed Odysseus, belittle not Death to me.
Well were I on earth's acres e'en to serve beneath the hand
Of some man of little living and lacking share of land,
Rather than here to lord it o'er all the dead outworn.
But come now, what word hither of my fair son hast thou borne,
Whether the war he followed as a chief, or did it not?
And tell me if some tidings of great Peleus thou hast got:
If yet mid the Myrmidon cities he holdeth honour still;
Or if through Hellas and Pthia all men his honour spill,

Because in bonds eld holdeth his hands and his feet foredone;
For no more am I his helper beneath the beams of the sun,
E'en such as I was aforetime when erst in Troy the wide
I slew the best of the people and held the Argive side;
Might I come to my father's dwelling for a while, and I e'en such!
Ah, then what a woe were my might and my hands that none dare touch
To those who lay wrong upon him and perforce his honour refrain!'

"So he spake; but I spake unto him and thuswise answered again:
'Forsooth of Peleus the blameless no tidings may I tell,
Whereas of Neoptolemus, thy son belovèd well,
All true tidings may I tell thee, e'en as thou biddest it.
For he in my trim ship's hollow in time agone did sit,
When him from out of Scyros to the well-greaved host I brought.
Forsooth when by Troy's city of any rede we thought
The first was he to be speaking, nor went his word awry;
And no man there outwent him save Nestor the godlike and I.
But when in the plain of the Trojans with point and edge we played,
Then nought mid the medley of men and amidst of the throng was he stayed,
But far before all was he running and yielded to none in his might.
And he slew of men full many in the stark and fearful fight.
Nor of all thereof may I tell thee or name their number through,
All those the many people whom the Argive champion slew.
But only of Telephus' son, whom he slew with the brazen spear,
Eurypylus the hero; and a many more there were
Of Ceteians who fell about him, and all for the gifts of a wife.
And he was the fairest I saw there, save Memnon the mighty in strife.
But when we went into the Horse that was wrought by Epeius' deed,
All we the best of the Argives, and thereof was I charged with the heed,
Both to open the strong-built ambush and to shut the door of it;
There the other Danaan chieftains and those who were wise of wit

Were wiping the tears, and trembling on the limbs of each did fall;
But him with mine eyes beholding I noted not at all
That his fair flesh waxed the paler, nor wiped he tears from his cheek,
But ever was he pressing, and the leave of me would seek
To be down and out of the Horse; while he clutched his sword-hilt still
And handled his spear brass-heavy as he brooded the Troy-folks ill.
But when the steep city of Priam with war we had undone
He went up on the ship with the honour and the share that he had won
Unscathed, and never smitten with the point and edge of brass
Nor hurt amid the hand-strokes, and all that cometh to pass
Where with confusèd mingling the Ares' strife betides.'

"Then down the asphodel meadow stalked off with mighty strides
The spirit of the Swiftfoot, the glorious Æacus' seed,
In joy of the tale I told him, and the fame of his offspring's deed.

"Then the other ghosts of the dead men and of those that had their bane
They stood about me mourning and told their grief again;
Save only the ghost of Ajax the son of Telamon:
For he stood aloof in anger because of the day that I won
When we twain in strife contended adown by the ships of the sea,
Concerning the arms of Achilles which his mother bade should be;
And thereof doomed Pallas Athene and the sons of the Trojans withal.
Woe worth the day of my winning! that such a strife should befal,
Whereby such a head as Ajax the Nether Earth should hold:
A man of body the fairest, and the best in the deeds of the bold
Of all the other Danaans next to Peleus' noble son.
So I spake in speech that was soothing, and uttered a word thereon:

"'Ajax, great Telamon's son! and wilt thou not forbear,
Not even in death, thine anger for the strife of the baleful gear,

The grief that the high Gods fashioned for us the Argive men?
What a tower fell down when ye perished! How all Achæans then
No otherwise mourned thy death-day than they mourned great Peleus' seed,
And the head of that Achilles! and none to blame for the deed
Save Zeus, who the Danaan war-host held utterly in hate,
And thereby laid upon thee the very doom of fate.
But, O King, draw thou anigh me, that my voice and my word ye may hear,
And thy wrath and thine heart overweening somewhat ye may forbear!'

"So I spake; but nought he answered, but with the other dead
And the ghosts of men departed to the Nether Dusk he sped.
But e'en so, though wroth, he had spoken, and I to him again,
But the heart in my breast belovèd withal was ever fain
To look upon the others, the ghosts of the dead and gone.

"There then I looked on Minos, of Zeus the glorious son;
And he held the golden king-staff and doomed the dead as he sat;
And a many standing about him sought dooms of this and that,
Or they sat in the House of Hades, the House of the Gaping Gate.

"And there I beheld Orion, the man so mighty great,
Driving the deer together down the mead of asphodel,
E'en those that he erst had slaughtered on lonely waste and fell:
And he held the club all brazen that ne'er shall be fordone.

"And Tityus there I looked on, the glorious Earth's own son,
On the earth a-lying along; and o'er nine roods he spread.
And each side of him did a vulture his liver shear and shred,
Within the caul a-groping: whom he warded not off with his hands.
For as she went to Pytho through fair Panopeus' lands

He dealt perforce with Leto, e'en Zeus' far-glorious wife.

"And Tantalus I looked on, gripped by a wretched life:
For in a mere was he standing that came anigh to his chin,
And there he stood and thirsted, and yet no drink might win:
For as oft as stooped the elder when he longed for the water sweet,
So oft it waned earth-swallowed; and round about his feet,
Lo there the black earth lying, by the God made parched and dry.
Moreover, trees high-blossomed put forth their fruit on high,
As pear-trees and pomegranates, and apples shining fair,
And figs as sweet as honey, and olives rich to bear;
But when up reached the elder his hands thereon to lay,
Unto the clouds, the dusky, the wind straight tossed them away.

"And Sisyphus there I looked on, gripped by strong sorrows' weight:
For with both hands was he lifting a stone most monstrous great,
And with hands and feet for ever against the stone did he strain,
Up o'er the bent to shove it: but e'en at point to gain
The brow and tumble it over, its weight would turn him back,
And adown to the plain was it rolling as a thing that all pity did lack.
And he strove and strained to thrust it aback, and from every limb
Flowed down the sweat, and the dust-cloud rose up from the head of him.

"And Heracles the mighty I saw when these went by;
His image indeed: for himself mid the Gods that never die
Sits glad at the feast, and Hebe fair-ancled there doth hold,
The daughter of Zeus the mighty and Here shod with gold.
But about him was noise of the dead, as of birds fear-wildered in flight
About and about; and he wended as the dusk of the midmost night,
With his bow all bare in his hand and the arrow laid on the string,

And peering around and about him, as who would loose at a thing;
And his breast was girded about with a belt of wonder and fear,
And of gold was that girdle fashioned, and strange things inwrought there,
As bears, and boars of the woodland, and lions gleaming-eyed,
And days of strife and battles, and murders of men that have died;
And he who that marvellous girdle by his craft did fashion and lay
Hath never wrought such another, nor will do yet on a day.

"But straight the hero knew me when he saw me with his eyes,
And amidst of lamentation bespake me in such wise:
O many-wiled Odysseus, Zeus-bred Laertes' son,
Luckless! and after such evil and such a doom dost thou run,
As underneath the sunlight in the days agone I bore;
And I, son's son of Cronos, yet with labour laden sore?
For I, e'en I, the bondsman of a worser man was made,
And strife most utter grievous and toil on me he laid:
And the dog of this land he sent me to fetch: for of every broil
This one he deemed the direst and the heaviest of toil.
Yet forsooth in the end I vanquished, and brought the beast from Hell,
And Grey-eyed Athene sped me, and Hermes sped me well.'

"So he spake, and into the House of Hades went his way;
And there awhile I abided till another thither should stray
Of the men that were the heroes and died in the days of old.
And more had I seen of the ancients, e'en those I was fain to behold,
As Theseus and Pirithoüs, the Gods' sons great of renown;
But thousand and thousandfold now was the throng of the dead men grown,
And awful was their clamour, and pale fear fell on me,
Lest forth from the House of Hades the dread Persephone
Should send me the Head of Gorgon, that monster of man's fear.

"So straight to the ship I hastened, and bade my fellows there
Themselves to get a-shipboard, and the hawsers loose to throw.
And up on the ship they gat them, and sat on the thwarts alow,
And adown the River of Ocean on the rippling stream we fared,
Sped first by the oars and the rowing, by a fair breeze afterward.

BOOK XII.

ARGUMENT.

ODYSSEUS COMETH BACK TO ÆÆA AGAIN, AND CIRCE GIVETH HIM COUNSEL CONCERNING HIS ROAD: HE PASSETH BY THE SIRENS AND HEARETH THEIR SONG: HE COMETH BY SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS AND LOSETH TO SCYLLA SIX OF HIS MEN. THENCE THEY COME TO THE ISLAND OF THE SUN, AND DESPITE OF WARNINGS HIS FELLOWS SLAY AND EAT OF THE KINE OF THE SUN. WHEREFORE IS THE SHIP WRECKED IN MID-SEA, AND ALL THE SHIPMEN PERISH SAVE ODYSSEUS, WHO BARELY SAVES HIMSELF FROM CHARYBDIS, WHENCE HE IS CARRIED TO THE ISLE OF OGYGIA, AND CHERISHED THERE BY CALYPSO AS IS AFORESAID.

"BUT when the stream of Ocean the ship had left, and she
Had gotten her back again to the wash of the open sea,
She came to the Isle Ææan where the house of the Day-dawn lies,
Where danceth the Mother of Morning and the Sun maketh ready to rise.
There then the ship were we laying, and we beached her on the sand,
And we ourselves went from her down on to the salt-sea strand.
And there we slept and slumbered and the Holy Dawn abode.

"But when the Mother of Morning, Rose-fingered Day-dawn, showed,
Forth then to the house of Circe my fellow-folk I sped,
To have away the body of Elpenor newly dead.
Then we cut the brands, and there where puts forth the outermost shore
We bury him in sorrow, and plenteous tears we pour:
But when all burnt is the body, and therewith the dead man's gear,

We heap the howe above him, and the standing stone uprear,
And withal on the topmost tomb we set his shapen oar.

"So everything we accomplish; but Circe none the more
Forgat our coming from Hades, but speedily fared out
To meet us, and her handmaids that were with her round about
Brought bread and flesh in plenty, and wine dark-gleaming and red,
And therewith the Godhead's Glory stood midst our folk and said:

"'O rash men, ye who living have gone down to Hades' Hall
To die twice o'er, when others of men die once for all,
Now daylong here be abiding to eat and to drink the wine,
And so set sail tomorrow when the day beginneth to shine.
But I will tell you of all things, and set forth all your way,
That no ill-shaped contrivance may lead your band astray,
And neither by land or by water ye may suffer toil and woe.'

"So she spake, and our noble hearts within us hearkened thereto,
And all day long we sat there till the going down of the sun,
On abundant flesh-meat feasting and sweet wine for every one.
But when the sun sank, and the darkness and the night o'er all 'gan slip,
There then the others slumbered round the hawsers of the ship;
But she took my hand and led me aloof from my fellows dear,
And set me adown, and lay near me, and all things of me would hear:
And straight I told her all things in manner meet and due.
And then that Circe beworshipped, she spake a word thereto:

"'So far hath all been accomplished; but my word do thou hearken and heed,
And the God shall give thee memory thereof amidst thy need:
Now the Sirens first ye shall come to; and these are even they
Who bewitch and beguile all menfolk that chance to come their way.

And he that cometh unwary and heareth the Sirens' voice,
His wife and his little children o'er him shall never rejoice,
And nevermore stand by him, and his happy homefare meet;
But the Sirens shall enchant him with their song the shrilly-sweet
As there they sit in their meadow, where great heaps of bones abound
Of dead men, rotting to nothing 'neath the waste skin wrapping them round.
Sail by aloof, and the wax honey-sweet with the hand do thou knead
To anoint the ears of thy fellows, lest a man of them hearken and heed.
But thou if thou willest may'st hearken: in thy ship the trim and fleet
Let those thy fellows bind thee full straitly hands and feet,
Upright in the step of the mast, whereto let the bonds be tied;
Thus hearing the voice of the Sirens in joy shalt thou abide.
But when thou prayest thy fellows, and biddest them let thee go,
Then yet again let them bind thee and add more bonds thereto.

"'But now, whenso thy fellows past these things thus shall fare,
Thenceforth all close and clearly I have not to declare
Which one of the ways shall be thine: thereof seek thou a rede
From thine own mind: but of either as now will I tell thee indeed:
Sheer rocks rise up on one side, and against them evermore
The waves of Amphitrite the dark-blue-eyed do roar;
And these Rocks are called the Strayers by the blessed Gods above,
And no fowl may fly betwixt them, nay, not e'en the kin of the dove
That unto Zeus the Father bears the meat of the Deathless thereby:
But ever the stone smooth-polished takes one as the flock doth fly,
And the Father sendeth another once more to make the tale.
Nor did any keel 'scape ever that 'twixt those rocks did sail;
But ever the ship's stout timbers and the bodies of the men
The waves of the sea and the wildfire smite, scattering there and then.
One ship alone hath passed them of all that have sailed the sea,
E'en Argo from Æetes for the heed of all to be:

And e'en her had the billows tossed on the mighty rocks and sheer,
But that Here speeded her onwards for Jason lief and dear.

"'Now the other way two rocks are: one goeth to the heavens wide,
Sharp-peaked, and the dark-blue cloud-rack besets it every side,
And neither in the summer, nor on any harvest day,
Its head 'gainst the clear sky showeth, nor draweth the rack away;
And no man on earth that dieth may climb it up or down,
Nay, not had he twenty hands or twenty feet of his own.
For smooth is the rock and polished as though by the hands of men.
Now there amidst that rockwall is a hollow darkling den,
Turned toward the west and the nightland; and thereby shall ye steer
Your hollow ship beneath you, O Odysseus lief and dear.
Nor could one from thy ship a-shooting in the prime of the life of men
Send an arrow by a bowshot to the inmost of the den.
And therein Scylla dwelleth, and fearfully doth yelp;
And forsooth the voice comes from her as the voice of a new-born whelp.
But an ill most monstrous is she, nor fain would any be,
As he went his ways, to behold her, not e'en if a God were he.
Twelve feet there are to her body, misshapen things ill-grown,
And six necks exceeding long, and a head on every one,
Most fearful; and within them are threefold rows of teeth
Thick-thronging, close together, fulfilled with dusky death.
In the hollow den is she sunken right up to her midmost there,
But aloft her heads she holdeth from out of that gulf of fear.
There she fisheth, peering around the rocks in every way
For seadogs or for dolphins, or for whales as a greater prey,
Of the myriads Amphitrite loud-wailing feeds at sea.
Her never yet might shipmen boast them unscathed to flee,
For with each head she snatcheth and beareth off with her
One man of every ship black-bowed that passeth there.

"'But the other crag wilt thou note, Odysseus, lying alow
As nigh unto the other as a shaft may fly from a bow;
And thereon a fig-tree waxeth, nor growth of leaves doth lack,
And beneath it dread Charybdis sucks the dark water back,
For thrice a-day she bloweth, and thrice she draweth it in:
Nor happen thou upon her when the back-draught she doth win,
For then not e'en Earth-shaker from thy bane could deliver thee.
But make for the rock of Scylla, and drive on hastily
Thy ship beyond it; for better forsooth shall it befall
To bewail six men from thy ship than to weep for one and all.'

"So she spake; but a word I uttered and thuswise answered thereto:
'Now tell me this, O Goddess, and tell me straight and true;
What if from the baleful Charybdis I might somehow win away
And might wreak me on the other, who shall take my folk as a prey?'

"So I spake; but that Godhead's Glory she spake and answered again:
'Of the deeds of toil and battle wilt thou for ever be fain,
Thou overbold, nor yield thee to the Gods that never die?
For this Thing never endeth, a bane for ever and aye.
Fierce, wild is she, and cruel, and not to be met in fight,
And nought may prevail against her: it is best to flee outright.
For if thou tarry to arm thee beside her rocky den
I fear lest she make an onrush and come against thee again,
And the clutch of her heads as aforetime on as many men shall be laid.
So drive on thy keel full swiftly, and call on Crataïs to aid,
The mother of that Scylla, who for men that evil bore,
And thenceforward shall she stay her that she fall on nevermore.'

[they feed,

"'Thence then shalt thou come to the Isle Three-horned, where a many
The neat of the Sun and his sheep-flocks, the mighty in the mead.

Seven herds of the beeves, and as many of the sheep-flocks goodly and fair,
And fifty in each, but no increase is gotten of them there,
Nor of them is any decrease: but their herds are Goddesses,
Phæthusa and Lampetië; and fair-haired nymphs are these,
And Neæra the holy bore them to the Sun the Rider Aloft:
And when their mother beworshipped had borne them and nourished them
Unto the Three-horned island she sent them aloof to dwell, [soft,
To guard the flocks of their father and his shambling oxen well.
Now if these thou leavest scatheless, and heedest thine homefare at all,
Unto Ithaca yet shall ye come whatever of trouble befal;
But if in aught ye scathe them, I bear witness of the bane
Of thy ship and all thy shipmen, and if thou escape shalt gain,
Late and evil shall be thy coming with thy company all gone.'

"So she spake, and amidst her speaking came Dawn of the Golden Throne,
And therewith the Godhead's Glory up the island went her way,
And I to the ship and my fellows, my word on them to lay
Themselves to go a-shipboard and the hawsers loose to throw.
And therewith they went a-shipboard and sat down on the thwarts alow,
And beat the grey sea with their oar-blades as they sat in order there,
And Circe, awful Goddess of the man-speech, sweet of hair,
Sent after our ship the black-bowed a fair and following breeze,
Sail-filling, the best fellow of shipmen on the seas.
And so when all the tackling about the ship we had dight
We sat us adown, and the breezes and the rudder bore us aright.

"But therewith I spake to my fellows from a laden heart of woe:
'O friends, it nought beseemeth that but one or two should know
The foretelling of the Goddess, and the thing that Circe saith,
So thereof I now will tell you, that ye too may be learned in death,
And how we may shun it and flee it, the death and the doom of the strong.

First then she biddeth us flee from the holy Sirens' song,
And that fair flowery meadow of theirs to leave behind:
Me only she biddeth to hearken; me therefore shall ye bind
In bonds both strait and hard, and I steadfast there to abide
Set upright in the mast-step, whereto shall the cords be tied:
But if I bid you to loose me, and if I command or I pray,
Then bonds yet more and straiter upon me shall ye lay.'

"Now while all things I was telling to my folk and hiding nought,
That while exceeding swiftly fared on the ship well-wrought
Toward the island of the Sirens, and the breeze drave fair and well;
But now dropped all the breezes and a windless calm befel,
And the God did all the billows to sleep and slumber lay.
So therewith arose the shipmen, and struck the sails straightway,
And in the shiphold stowed them and sat down to the oars forthright,
And so with the shaven fir-wood they beat the water white.
Then piecemeal a loaf of wax I sheared with the whetted brass,
And that same with my sturdy hand I laboured, and brought it to pass
That it warmed; for my might constrained it, and the bright beams made it soft,
The beams of the Sun, the King, the seed of the Rider Aloft.
Then one by one I anointed the ears of all my men,
And hand and foot they bound me in mine own ship there and then,
Upright in the step of the mast, and the rope-yarn thereto tied;
Then they sat and beat with their oar-blades the grey sea by our side.

"But when landward we drew so nearly as the sound of shout ye may hear,
As we ran on swiftly, they missed not the fleet ship drawing anear,
And shrilly-sweet about us the voice of song they woke:

"'Come hither, Odysseus bepraised, thou fame of Achæan folk,
Stay here thy ship beside us that our song thou may'st hearken today;

For never hereby hath any in a black ship wended his way
Ere the honey-sweet voice he had hearkened that forth from the mouth of [us flows;
And then in joy he departeth, and many a thing he knows:
For all the toil we wot of that erst in Troy the wide,
The Argives and the Trojans of God must needs abide; 190
Yea, all things that hereafter upon the Earth shall be.'

"Such words of their lovely voices they sped, but the heart in me
Was fain indeed of hearkening, and I bade men loose me away
With signs of nodding and frowning, but out on their oars they lay;
And up rose Perimedes and Eurylochus thereto,
And more bonds exceeding straitly about me did they do.
But when the ship we had driven past these and now no more
I could hear the sound of the Sirens and the song that their voices bore,
Then straight my trusty fellows did the wax from their ears away,
And therewithal they loosed me from the bonds that on me lay. 200

"But when we had left the island, a little afterward
A reek I saw and great billows, and the roar of the surf I heard.
Then fell their hands from the oar-hefts as they sat aghast with fear,
And all clashed as down we drifted, and the ship hung holden there,
Since now the oars long-reaching with the hands no more they plied.
Then up and down I traversed the ship my fellows to chide,
And with soothing words bespake them by each man standing anear:

"'O friends, no men unlearned in evil haps are here;
No greater bale is upon us than when in the Cyclops' land,
In the hollow den he cooped us, with the very might of his hand. 210
But even thence we escaped by my valour and counsel and guile,
And of these things too shall we mind us, and tell the tale in a while.
But come now, e'en as I bid you, do all ye do aright,

And the heavy wash of the billows with your oar-blades do ye smite
As ye sit adown on the benches; and so Zeus give us the gain
That we shun the sheer destruction and escape the day of bane!
But this charge I give thee O helmsman, and lay it well to heart,
Since to rule the hollow ship with the rudder is thy part:
Drive thou the ship aloof through the reek and the wallowing sea,
And no less hug thou the rock, lest she slip away from thee,
And fall off yonder, and thuswise we drift upon harm and ill.'

"So I spake, and straight they hearkened and heeded my word and my will;
But nought I told them of Scylla, the all-unbearable bane,
Lest they perchance in their terror from the rowing might refrain,
And huddled all together beneath the deck should sit.
But that hard word of Circe nought I abode by it,
Whereas she straitly charged me nowise in arms to stand;
But I did on my noble war-gear, and two long spears in my hand
I gat and I bore, and onward to the foredeck did I go,
For I deemed that from there the first would that Rock-haunter show,
That Scylla who was biding for my fellows' bale and bane:
But no sight of her I gathered, though mine eyes they toiled amain
To search the darkling rock-den inwards and all around.
So thuswise for our sorrow we sailed on through the sound,
Here Scylla: there Charybdis, the Holy, awfully
Drew in the salt-sea-water amid the wallowing sea;
But when aback she cast it, as a pot on a mighty fire
She would boil up, mingled together and ever from higher and higher,
On both the rocks high towering down fell the scattering foam.
But when the salt-sea-water again she swallowed home,
Then she showed within all mingled, and the rock roared terribly
All round about, and adown there the earth was plain to see
Black-sandy: then on my fellows came fear the deadly pale.

But while we gazed upon her foreboding utter bale,
Lo out of the hollow ship did Scylla catch away
Six men of their hands the mightiest, and the best in the battle-play;
And looking aback to my fellows along the ship the fleet
There nought of them I beheld, but above me their hands and their feet,
As they aloft were lifted; and they called and cried withal,
And cried by my name upon me the last and woeful call.
As the fisher sits on the headland with a rod that reaches long,
And unto the little fishes casts food for a guile and a wrong,
And the horn of an ox of the meadow he sendeth into the sea,
And so the fish all struggling aland there lifteth he,
E'en so were they lifted gasping into that rock-abode,
And there on the threshold she ate them still crying out aloud,
And reaching their hands unto me amid the wretched strife.
And that was the sight most piteous of all the sights of my life
Midst all my labours and troubles as I searched the ways of the sea.

"But when the rock of Charybdis we had made a shift to flee,
And from Scylla, thence thereafter we came to the island fair,
The Isle of the God, and his kine wide-foreheaded are there,
And all the fat flocks a many of the Sun the Rider on High;
And so as we sailed the sea-flood in our black ship drawing anigh,
The lowing of neat I hearkened from the stalls, and withal I heard
The bleatings of the sheep-flocks, and into my mind came the word
Of Tiresias the Theban, the seer blind of sight,
And of Ææan Circe, who charged me both outright
To flee away from the island of the man-delighting Sun;
So thus I spake to my fellows from a heart with grief undone:

"'Hearken my word, O fellows, for all the ill that ye bear!
That Tiresias' foretelling to you I may declare,

And the word of Ææan Circe, wherewith they bade outright
To flee the Isle of the Sun, who beareth men delight:
For there, said he, of all evils should the worst to us betide:
So drive the black ship, I bid you, beyond the island's side.'

"So I said; but the hearts within them were broken as I spake,
And with a word unhappy did Eurylochus answer make:

"'Thou art overbold, Odysseus, and might abides in thee,
Nor are thy limbs for-wearied; all of iron must thou be,
Since thou wilt not suffer thy fellows, outworn with toil and sleep,
To go aland a little on this island of the deep,
Where with the sea around us fair supper we may dight;
But ever wouldst thou have us stray on through the hasty night,
And leave the isle to wander o'er the shadow-haunted sea.
Ill too are the winds of the night-tide, and the bale of ships they be;
How then might we escape it, our bale and our deadly doom,
If all unwares upon us a blast of the wind should come
From the South, or the West hard-blowing, which most of all the winds
Will rend the ships asunder despite the King-Gods' minds?
So now let us hearken the bidding of the dusky night, and abide,
And dight us here our supper adown by the swift ship's side;
But at daybreak going a shipboard o'er the wide sea wend on our way.'

"So Eurylochus spake in suchwise, and the others said him yea,
But once again I, knowing the bane that the God would devise,
Set wingèd words before them, and bespake them in suchwise:

"'Eurylochus, I am alone, and great force ye lay on me,
But do all ye swear an oath, and most mighty let it be,
If we come on a herd of oxen, or a sheep-flock come our way,

No man in his fateful folly one head thereof shall slay,
Be it of kine or of sheep-kind, but in peace eat that ye have,
The meat that of her goodwill the deathless Circe gave.'

"So I spake, and thereto they hearkened and sware the oath that I bade;
But when of the oath and the swearing an end they now had made,
Then in the hollow haven the well-wrought ship did they moor
Anigh to a fair sweet water, and therewith went ashore,
And there in skilful fashion the meal of evening dight.
But when of meat and of drink they had quenched the longing outright,
Then fell they to remembrance, and their fellows they bewept,
The prey that Scylla devoured from out the ship's womb swept;
And sleep fell on them weeping, and slumber on them lay.

"But in the third watch of the night, when the stars were shifting their way
Then Zeus Cloud-gatherer stirred us a foul and furious wind,
Blent with a monstrous whirl-blast, and heaven with clouds did blind,
Confusing the earth and the sea-flood, and night from the sky rushed down.
But when the Mother of Morning, Rose-fingered Daydawn, shone,
We beached the ship in a rock-den, and hauled her high therein
Where the nymphs were wont to be sitting, or the joy of dance would win.
And thereto I called an assembly wherein I spake the word:

"'Friends, since in our ship swift-fleeting is drink and victual stored,
Do we from these beasts refrain us lest an evil fate we bear;
For these are the kine and the sheep of a God whom all men fear,
The Sun who beholdeth all things, and hearkeneth every deed.'

"So I spake, and their noble spirits unto my words gave heed;
But unlulling blew the South wind, and month-long no breeze at all
Rose up o'er the sea save the South and the Easterly wind withal.

Yet so long as for bread they lacked not, nor lacked for the ruddy wine,
Whereas they were fain of their life-days they held their hands from the kine.
But at last, when all the victual that lay in the ship was spent,
Egged on by need they wandered, and after the prey they went,
And fish and fowl and all thing that came to hand was dear,
And they fished with the crooked angles; for want their bellies did wear.

"Then up the isle I hied me unto the Gods to pray,
If yet some God among them would show me the homeward way;
So I came right up the island, and left my fellows behind,
And my hands I washed in a cranny that was sheltered from the wind
And prayed unto the God-folk that up in Olympus dwell.
And they shed sweet sleep on mine eyelids, and slumber on me fell.

"But Eurylochus in meantime stirred up the folk to ill:
'Hearken my words, O fellows, with evil laden still!
All manner of death is loathly to wretched men that die,
But to meet our fate by famine is to end most wretchedly:
So come, and these beasts of the Sun, the best thereof let us drive
And slay them unto the Deathless, who in the wide heavens live,
And so unto Ithaca coming, and our fatherland of old days,
There then to the Rider Aloft, to the Sun a fair house shall we raise
And set gifts therein a many and goodly things of price.
But and if for his straight-horned oxen his wrath should yet arise,
And he will our ships to ruin and the Gods all with him be,
Yet better to perish gasping in the swallow of the sea
Than here in an isle deserted of life to be drained all dry.'

"So Eurylochus spake; and the others said yea in company,
And the best of the kine of the Sun they fell to driving now
From hard by; for no long distance from the ship of the dusky bow

Were the shambling kine a-feeding, wide-foreheaded and fair.
So now they stand around them and unto the Gods make prayer,
And from off a high-branched oak-tree the tender limbs they strip,
For nought of barley was left them within the well-decked ship. [flayed,
But when they had hallowed and slaughtered, and the beasts withal had
Then they cut the steaks of the buttock which with fat they overlaid,
Wrapping it round twofolded and the raw flesh laying o'er;
And no sweet wine was left them on the holy roast to pour,
So they poured the water in worship and with fire the entrails dight.
But when they had burnt up the buttocks and tasted the inwards aright,
Then they cut up the rest into gobbets and spitted it fair and well.

"But in that very moment deep sleep from mine eyelids fell,
And adown to the fleet-faring ship and the side of the sea I hied,
But when on my way I drew nigh to the ship of the swelling side,
Then the roast and the fragrance of fat came up about me there,
And groaning, unto the Deathless, the Gods, I made my prayer:

"'Zeus Father, and all ye Happy, whose lifedays never wane,
Into pitiless sleep have ye lulled me to bring about my bane,
While my fellows there abiding have done a monstrous deed.'

"Soon then to the Sun, the High Rider, did the bearer of tidings speed;
Long-robed Lampetië told it, how we the kine did slay.
Then wrathful of heart to the Deathless in this wise did he say:

"'Zeus Father, and all ye Happy, whose lifedays ne'er are done,
Avenge me of those fellows of Odysseus, Laertes' son,
Who in folly have slain my beasts that I joyed in when I went
Aloft on my ways to the heavens and the starry firmament,
And when again from the heavens to the earth I turned away.

Now if for my cattle's slaying no penalty they pay,
To the Nether Dusk will I get me and shine amidst the dead.'

"Then Zeus, the Cloud-packs' Herder, he answered him and said:
'O Sun, shine out as ever amidst the Deathless here,
And shine on men that perish on the corn-kind earth and dear.
With my white bolt of the thunder their swift ship presently
Will I smite, and cleave it piecemeal amid the wine-dark sea.'

"Of this talk forsooth was I learning from Calypso lovely of hair,
Who said that Hermes the Flitter to herself did the tidings bear.

"So when I was gotten aback to the ship's side and the sea
One after other I chid them, yet forsooth no remedy
It availed us to seek, for stark dead already were the kine.
And straight the Gods 'gan show us a wonder and a sign;
For the flayed-off skins crept onward, and the flesh on the spits lowed out
Both the roast and the raw, and the voices of neat were all about.

"So for six days thereafter my fellows feasted there,
Driving off from the herds of the Sun whatever was fairer than fair;
But when Zeus the Son of Cronos the seventh day had made
The wind with the tempest raging to rest awhile he laid,
Then aboard we gat us and outward to the open sea did we fare,
And the mast in its stead we 'stablished and hauled the sails in air.
But when we had left that Island there opened no new land,
And nought but the sea and the heavens we saw on either hand;
Then over our hollow ship the Son of Cronos drew
A coal-blue cloud, and beneath it all black the sea-waves grew;
And no long while ran on the ship, for there came upon us at last
The shrilly west loud piping with the rush of a mighty blast,

And therewith did the weight of the stormwind both mainstays break and shear,
And the mast withal fell aftward, and huddling fell the gear
Adown in the hold together, and in the steering-stead
It smote the skull of the helmsman, and all the bones of his head
It crushed at once together, and straight from the deck adown
He dropped as dives a diver, and the soul from his body had flown;
And therewithal Zeus thundered on the ship with a lightning stroke,
And by his bolt sore smitten through all her frame she shook,
And full was she of brimstone; outboard the men were thrown,
And like unto the sea-mews round the black ship were they strown
In the wash of the waves, and their homefare from them the God did take.

"But for me the ship I traversed till the beat of the billows brake
The sides from the keel, and naked the sea-waves bore it along,
And had torn off the mast by the keel; but about it, wrought of a thong
Well fashioned of an ox-hide, yet was the backstay cast.
So I bound the twain together therewith, both keel and mast,
And, sitting thereon, by the blast of the baleful winds was I sped

"But now the West wind's fury and his stormy blast fell dead,
And swift thereon came the South wind and brought me grief again
Lest my way I must measure backward to Charybdis and her bane.
Night-long thenceforth was I carried, and with the rising sun
I came to the crags of Scylla and Charybdis the fearful one,
And she the salt-sea water as now was swallowing in;
But cast against her fig-tree aloft there did I win,
And hung on as a bat hangs clinging; nor foot-hold there I found
Whereby to make me steady, and no way to the upper ground;
For the roots spread far below me, and o'erhead far aloof
Were the great long boughs and lofty that Charybdis over-roof:
So I held on steadfast, awaiting till she should vomit again

The mast and the keel, and full late they came to make me fain.
But just when a man ariseth from the Court to his supper and home,
Who hath doomed in a many strifes of the young men seeking for doom,
Just then from the maw of Charybdis those timbers twain did show;
So I reached me downward towards them and hands and feet let go,
And plumped adown amidmost beyond the long-wrought wood,
And sitting there upon them with both my hands I rowed.
And so wrought the Father of Gods and of Men that I was not seen
Of Scylla; for then no refuge from bitter bane had been.

'Thence nine days was I carried, and on the tenth night-tide
To Ogygia's isle God brought me where Calypso doth abide,
The fair-haired Goddess beworshipped, who speaketh the speech of men;
And she took me and cherished me kindly. But hereof why tell thee then?
Since yesterday here in thine house I told the tale to thee,
To thee and thy goodly helpmate; and irksome 'tis to me
To tell again of matters that told out clearly be."

BOOK XIII.

ARGUMENT.

ODYSSEUS IS CARRIED OVER TO ITHACA BY THE PHÆACIANS, AND LAID SLEEPING IN HIS OWN LAND AMIDST HIS GIFTS: AWAKING HE KNOWS NOT THE COUNTRY, TILL ATHENE, AT FIRST IN THE LIKENESS OF A SHEPHERD AND THEN AS A WOMAN, COMETH TO HIM: SHE BIDDETH HIM SEEK OUT EUMÆUS HIS SWINEHERD, AND CHANGETH HIS ASPECT TO THE SIMILITUDE OF AN OLD GANGREL MAN SO THAT HE MAY NOT BE KNOWN.

SO he spake, and all those people they sat in silence there,
For the tale's delight bound all men through the shadowy halls and fair.
But at last Alcinoüs answered and spake to him and said:

"Yea, now thou art come, Odysseus, to my house high-roofed o'erhead,
And brazen-floored, I deem not that thou shalt wander more
And stray from thy returning for all thy troubles sore.
But for you, a thing I tell you, and on each a charge I lay,
All ye, who in my feast-hall are wont from day to day
To drink the dark wine of worship, and hearken the minstrel's song.
Lo now for the guest the garments in the smooth chest lie along,
And the gold all deftly fashioned, and the other gifts dear-bought:
That the wise Phæacian chieftains already here have brought;
But a tripod and a caldron now give we every man,
And thereafter mid the people shall we gather that we can
In boot thereof; for 'tis heavy for free gifts on one to fall."

In suchwise spake Alcinoüs, and his word seemed good to all,
And therewith they departed and home they went each one.

But when the Mother of Morning, Rose-fingered Day-dawn, shone,
Then adown to the ship they hastened with the man-delighting brass,
And Alcinoüs holy in might about through the ship did pass
And neath the thwarts in order laid all, lest when they drave
The ship with oars a-speeding some hurt a man might have.

Then they went to Alcinoüs' house, and a fair feast there they dight,
And for them an ox he hallowed, Alcinoüs holy in might,
To Zeus the Son of Cronos, Black-cloudy, all men's King:
And they burned up the thighs and were merry in their noble banqueting;
And amidst them the holy minstrel Demodocus sang out,
Beloved of the folk. But Odysseus would ever turn about
His head to the Sun to behold him, as he shone on all and o'er,
As one who desired his setting, for he longed for his homefare sore
—Like a man who longeth for supper for whom daylong by now
Through the fallow two dark oxen have dragged the jointed plough,
And fain is he of the sunset and the ending of the day
That speedeth him home to his supper; and his knees are stiff on the way:
—E'en so fain was now Odysseus of the waning of the light,
And unto those Phæacians oar-fain he spake outright;
And chief unto Alcinoüs he let the word fly forth:

"O lord and king Alcinoüs, of the people most of worth!
Pour now, and send me homeward in peace, and hail be ye!
For now are all things ready that my dear heart longed to be,
The speeders and gifts of well-wishers; and thereof may the Gods of the [heaven
Give me all good! and at home may this to me be given,
That there I may find my helpmate and my loved friends safe and sound!

But may joy with you here abiding with your wedded wives abound,
And with your children also! God give you health and might,
And may no kind of evil on the folk of this land alight!"

So he spake; and all yea-said him, and bade the thing to be,
That the guest on his way be speeded since he spake so righteously;
And straightway unto the herald thus spake Alcinoüs' might:

"Now blend the bowl Pontonoüs, and deal the wine aright
To all folk in the feast-hall, that to father Zeus we may pray,
And unto the land of his fathers we may speed the guest away."

He spake, and Pontonoüs straightway the wine heart-soothing filled,
And dealt it about to all men, and drink-offering then they spilled
To the happy Gods of the Heavens, the widespread place and fair,
From where they sat in the high-seat; but Odysseus stood up there,
And unto the hand of Arete the double cup did he take,
And speeding speech unto her, this wingèd word he spake:

"Hail thou, O Queen, henceforward until eld come on thee,
And death at last and at latest which unto all must be!
I go, but be thou happy abiding in thine house
With thy children and thy people and the King Alcinoüs!"

So saying over the threshold divine Odysseus went,
And withal the herald before him the King Alcinoüs sent,
And down to the ship the speedy, and the side of the sea he led,
And the servants of the women Arete with him sped:
Whereof one bore a mantle and a frock well-washed and fair;
And the weight of the strong-made coffer another woman bare;
And yet there went another, and red wine and bread bore she.
But when they came unto the ship and down to the side of the sea

Therewith the noble speeders took all the gear aboard,
And adown in the hollow ship the meat and drink they stored;
And then they spread for Odysseus a rug and a linen sheet
On the hollow black ship's aft-deck, to sleep on soft and sweet.
So then he went a-shipboard and lay down silently,
And they sat them adown on the benches, each in order as should be.
And so they loosed the hawsers from the hole of the stone on shore.

But as they cast them abackward and tossed up the brine with the oar,
E'en then upon his eyelids did sleep and slumber speed,
Sweetest, and most unbroken, most like to death indeed;
But she, as over the plain the stallions' fourfold yoke
Rush, driven on together by the whip-lash and the stroke,
And rear aloft and speed them, and easy way they make,
So rose her stern on the sea waves, and following on her wake
Rolled on the dark-blue billow of the tumble of the sea:
So all unscathed and steady she sped, nor swift as she
Might fly the stark gerfalcon, the swiftest of all fowl,
As swiftly running onward she cleft the sea-flood's roll,
Bearing a man most like to the Gods for his wisdom and guile,
Who many a sorrow had suffered, and was soul-tossed on a while
As he went through the warfare of men and the terrible deeds of the deep;
But slept there now unfearful, and forgat all woes in sleep.

But when that star was arising, the brightest that cometh his way,
With the tidings of the Day-dawn and the light of the Mother of Day,
The ship on the sea-waves flitting drew nigh the island then.
Know now that there lieth an haven in the land of the Ithacan men,
Of Phorcys the salt-sea's elder, and therein two nesses stand,
Shear cliffs thrust toward the haven drawn down on either hand,
That ward the swell that ariseth 'neath the great winds' mastery,

So that the keels, the well-decked, unmoored within may lie,
When unto the goal of the roadstead at last they have gotten to be.
But there at the head of the haven is a long-leaved olive-tree,
And nigh to the tree a rock-den, lovely and shaded all,
Unto the Nymphs made holy whom men the Naiads call.
And therewithin are wine-bowls and wine-jars all of stone;
And there the bees hive honey, and therewithal are done
Long looms of stone, whereinto the very Nymphs do weave
Sea-purple webs more wondrous than eyes may well believe;
And therein are the waters welling. But two ingates are to the den;
The one to the north-side facing is meet for the going of men,
But that to the south more holy, and no gate for men is this,
That they thereby should enter, but the road of the Deathless it is.

Thereto the ship were they driving, for they knew the place of yore;
And therewithal swift speeding she ran half-length on the shore,
So well forsooth was she driven by oarsmen deft of hand:
But they from the decked ship going fared up upon the land;
And first from the hollow ship Odysseus' self they bare,
And he lying on the linen and the blanket glossy-fair,
And there on the sand they laid him in slumber bound as yet.
Then that gear from the ship they carried which he erewhile did get
From Phæacian lords on his homefare through Athene's mighty soul;
And all that in a heap together they laid by an olive bole
And out of the road; lest some one of the land's wayfaring men
Should pass ere Odysseus wakened and spoil it there and then.

Then home again they hied them, nor yet did the Shaker of Earth
Forget his threats 'gainst Odysseus, the peer of the Gods in worth,
Wherewith erewhile he threatened; so the rede of Zeus he sought:

"Zeus Father, well may my worship midst the Deathless come to nought
When now midst men that perish no more they worship me;
Nay not those men Phæacian though of my blood they be.
Lo now! I meant that Odysseus should come home safe on a day
Through many a woe; nor his homefare would I utterly take away
Since thou hadst first yea-said it, and promised it to be.
But him in a swift ship sleeping have they ferried o'er the sea,
And in Ithaca set him adown with goodly gifts and rare,
Yea, gold and brass abundant, and raiment woven fair,
So much that no such a deal had Odysseus borne away
Had he come from Troy-town scathless with his own allotted prey."

Then Zeus, the Cloud-pack's Herder, he answered again and said:
"Hah, Shaker of Earth, far swaying, what a word hereof hast thou made!
The Gods mar not thy worship; yea, this indeed were hard
If thou, our best and our eldest, by our own hands were marred;
But if one of mankind yield him to his might and mastery
And mar thine honour henceforward, with thee doth the wreaking lie.
Do thy will then, and accomplish the thing that thy soul deems dear."

Then Poseidon the Earth's Shaker, he spake and answered there:
"Nay, I had not tarried to do it, Black-cloudy, after thy word;
But thy wrath have I ever dreaded, and fain would I shun it, lord;
But now the lovely ship of that Phæacian folk
As she cometh aback from the ferry would I shatter with my stroke
Mid the darkling deep, that henceforward they ferry men no more,
And with a mighty mountain their burg will I shadow o'er."

Then Zeus, the Cloud-pack's Herder, thus answered thereupon:
"O friend, thuswise I deem it the meetest to be done:
When all the folk of the city behold her hard at hand

Swift speeding, smite her straightway to a rock anigh the land,
And yet a swift ship's image, that all men may wonder sore;
And with a mighty mountain shalt thou shade their city o'er."

But when Poseidon had heard him, then the Shaker of the Earth
Went on his ways to Scheria, whence Phæacians have their birth;
And there abode: and the sea-swift, the ship, came close anigh
Swift speeding; then Earth Shaker drew near and stood thereby,
And into stone he turned her, and rooted her below,
With the stroke of his hand laid flatling, and thence away did he go.

But unto one another winged words they uttered then,
Those long-oar-wont Phæacians, the ship-renownèd men;
And thus unto his neighbour some one of them would say:
"O me! who then on the sea-flood hath made our ship to stay,
E'en as she sped her homeward clear seen of every one?"

Thuswise would they be speaking, nor knew they how 'twas done.
But Alcinoüs spake unto them, and thuswise spake he out:
"Hah! how the old foretelling of my father cometh about!
Whereas he said that Poseidon would be wroth with us one day
Because we ferry all men all scathless on their way.
And that once on a while he would ruin a fair ship of Phæacian men
On the darkling deep, as she hied her from the ferrying back again,
And that he would o'ershadow our city with the mound of a mighty hill.
Such things would the elder give out, and all this doth God fulfil:
So do ye after my bidding, and let us all obey:
Cease we from the ferrying of menfolk whoever cometh his way
And entereth this our city; and twelve bulls of the best ye may get
To Poseidon let us hallow, that he may pity us yet,
Nor with the hill high-reaching may hide our burg outright."

So he spake, and sore they dreaded, and the bulls for the hallowing dight.

But while unto King Poseidon these men in suchwise prayed,
And the lords of those Phæacians, and they who the people swayed
Stood round about the altar, from his sleep Odysseus awoke
In the very land of his fathers; yet knew not the place of his folk,
So long had he been absent: and round about him there
Zeus' Daughter, Pallas Athene, spread a mist amid the air,
That all things she might tell him while yet he was unknown,
Ere either his wife should know him or his friends or the folk of his town,
Before on the Wooers he wreaked him of their prideful mastery.
Therefore all things about him the King as strange did see,
The uncrooked ways far-reaching, the all-safe haven there,
The steep high rocks and the trees, well growing, leafy-fair.

So he rose and stood on his feet, and looked on his father-land,
And groaned therewith, and smiting his thigh with the flat of his hand
He spake a word as he stood there amidst of his weary woe:
"O me! to what land of men-folk that die am I gotten now?
Wild men of no dooms wotting, and masterful of mood,
Or godly men of counsel, guest-loving men and good?
This stuff, whither now do I bear it, and myself whereto do I stray?
Would God that mid the Phæacians I had bided many a day,
Then had I come to some other of the Kings that are of might,
Who belike had cherished me kindly and sped me home aright.
And now forsooth I wot not where these things I shall lay;
For here I will not leave them lest to men they fall a prey.
Out on it! not in all things were they wise and righteous then,
The captains and the elders of those Phæacian men,
Who unto an alien land have brought me; they who said
They would flit me to Ithaca clear-seen, nor good their word have made.

May Zeus of the Suppliants wreak me, who of all men warder is,
And avengeth him of each man who against him doeth amiss!
But now these goods will I look to, and tell them o'er, lest they
In their hollow ship have taken thereof when they went on their way."

So saying the goodly tripods and bowls he numbered and told,
And the goodly woven raiment and all the store of gold,
And thereof no whit was lacking: but his father-land he bewept
As along the shore of the wallow of the washing seas he crept
Lamenting all. But thither now Athene drew anear,
And the semblance of a youngling, a shepherd of sheep, did she wear,
A delicate swain of suchlike as the sons of kings may be:
A cloak about her shoulders two-fold well-wrought had she,
And shoes on her sleek-skinned feet, and in her hand a spear.
But Odysseus was glad when he saw her and came and stood anear,
And therewith he spake unto her in wingèd words and fleet:

"Hail friend! since in this country thou art the first I meet,
And I bid thee with no evil do thou withstand my way,
But save me, my goods and me also, since unto thee I pray
As unto a God: beseeching I come to thy dear knees.
So tell me truly of matters, since well thou wottest of these;
What land is this, and what people, and what men dwell hereby?
Is it one of the manifest islands, or doth the land here lie
Sloped downlong on the salt-sea, the fruitful land of the main?"

But the Goddess, the Grey-eyed Athene, thus spake and answered again:
"Witless art thou, O Stranger, or from far across the sea,
Whereas of the land thou askest; for never shall it be
A nought and nameless country; there knoweth it many an one,
Both of the men abiding toward the eastward and the sun,

And of those that are over against it down toward the darkling west.
Forsooth 'tis a craggy country, nor yet for horse-draught best;
Yet not a land so sorry, though nothing wide it be,
For it beareth corn past telling, and wine abundantly;
Since ever the shower hath it and the all-abounding dew;
A goat-land good, and a neat-land, and all kinds of wood thereto;
And therein are watering-places unfailing through the year.
Yea to Troy-town, O Stranger, would the name of Ithaca fare,
For as far as men say that it lieth from the lands of Achæan men."

So she spake, but the goodly Odysseus toil-stout was glad as then,
In his father-land rejoicing when she spake unto him thus,
E'en Pallas Athene the Daughter of the great shield-bearing Zeus.
And he sent his voice unto her, and wingèd words he said;
Yet the very truth he told not, but the word aback he stayed;
For ever was he holding in his heart a gainful wit:

"Of Ithaca know I; yea, even in wide Crete I heard of it
Far over the sea, and as now am I come thereto, both I
And these my goods; but as many I left with my children to lie
When I fled because I had slain Idomeneus' son most dear,
E'en Orsilochus swift-footed, who in wide Crete dwelt, and there
All men gainseeking vanquished with his feet the swift on the way.
Now he indeed would have spoiled me of all my Troy-won prey
For the which my soul had suffered so many a misery,
And worn through the wars of manfolk and the dreadful waves of the sea
Because I would not serve him, nor please his father's will
Amid the folk of the Trojans, but led mine own folk still.
So him from the field a-wending I smote with the brazen spear
As I with a fellow lay lurking the highway-side anear;
And black night hid the heavens, and no man as we lay

Might note us there; so in secret I took his life away.
But when with the brass sharp-whetted I had slain him there and then
I went to a ship, and besought them, the proud Phœnician men,
And gave to them of the plunder what their souls might satisfy,
And bade them bear me to Pylos and set me down thereby,
Or unto the holy Elis where Epeian men bear sway.
But forsooth the might of the wind it drave them thence away,
Sore 'gainst their will; nor would they have beguiled me with unright.
So then from our course a-straying, hither we came a night
And in haste thrust into the haven; nor of supper had we heed,
No one of us, though soothly thereof we had sore need,
But e'en so from our ship we gat us, and lay down one and all,
And over me sore wearied sweet sleep failed not to fall.
Then from out of the hollow ship they bore my goods aland,
And laid them adown beside me as I slept upon the sand;
And they went aboard, and departed for Sidon builded fair,
But me with heart sore grieving they left behind them here."

So he spake; but the Grey-eyed, the Goddess Athene, smiled and now
She stroked him down with her hand and like to a woman did grow
Comely and great of body, and deft fine things to make;
So she sent her voice out toward him, and wingèd words she spake:

"Ah, cunning were he and shifty, who thee should overbear
In guilefulness of all kinds, yea e'en if a god he were!
Thou hard one, shifty of rede, guile-greedy, nought wouldst thou
From thy guilefulness refrain thee, nay not in thine own land now,
And thy words of sly devising which thou lov'st from the root of thine heart.
But speak we no more of such things; for we twain know each for our part
All guile; since thou amidst menfolk art far the best of all
In counsel and in speech-words; and on me mid the Gods doth fall

The glory of redes and of sleight.—And thou knewest not me, the Maid,
The Daughter of Zeus, e'en Pallas Athene, ever thine aid,
Who stand beside thee and ward thee in all toil through which ye wear?
Who unto all Phæacians have made thee lief and dear?
And hither to thee am I come, that we may devise, we twain,
How to hide away thy treasure, the Phæacians' gift and gain,
Which they gave thee on thy homefare by my counsel and device.
And now of the fateful troubles would I tell thee in likewise
In thy builded house that abide thee: now forbear, and bear thou the
Nor unto any tell it how thou comest wandering home, [doom,
Neither of men nor of women, but in silence suffer all
Thy many griefs, and the mastery that from men shall thee befall."

Then the many-wiled Odysseus, he answered presently:
"O Goddess, 'tis hard for a mortal, though wise of wit he be,
To know thee when he meets thee, for shapes many dost thou on.
But this I know full surely, thou wert kind a while agone
While we sons of the Achæans by Troy-town fought the fight;
But when the steep city of Priam we had overthrown outright
And went up on our ships, and God scattered the Achæans wide abroad,
I saw thee not thenceforward, nor yet my ship aboard
Did I note thee, O Daughter of Zeus, for the putting away of my woe;
But ever with heart sore burdened a wandering did I go
Till the day when the Gods unbound me and the spell of evil broke,
And there midst the men Phæacian and the very wealthy folk
With words then didst thou cheer me, and me to the city didst lead,
But now by the Father I pray thee,—for I deem not yet indeed
That to Ithaca the clear-seen I am come, but am turned away
To some other land; and for thee, these words that thou dost say
Thou speakest but in jesting to mock and cheat my mind.—
In very sooth, am I gotten to my father-land the kind?"

Then answered the Grey-eyed, the Goddess Athene, and thus spake she:
"Yea, and such a thought for ever within thy breast must be!
Yet here I may not leave thee amidst thy grief of heart,
Soft-spoken, and keen-witted, and wise to forbear as thou art.
For another man returning from the straying and the strife
Would be eager to look on his homestead and his children and his wife;
But thou in nowise willest to seek out what hath been
Ere thy wife thou hast tried yet further; who still as erst, I ween,
Within her halls abideth and mourneth thee always,
And ever in weeping weareth the night-tide and the days;
But this I never doubted but in my mind held fast,
That thou having lost thy fellows shouldst come home at the last:
But look you, I had no mind against Poseidon to fight,
My father's very brother, who had thee in despite,
For wrath because of thy blinding of his well-belovèd son.
Now the Ithacan land will I show thee, that assured thou may'st look thereon.
For this is the haven of Phorcys the Elder of the sea;
And lo, at the head of the haven a long-leaved olive-tree,
And anigh the same a rock-den full lovely, shaded withal;
The holy place of the Nymphs whom men the Naiads call.
Lo, this is the roofed-in rock-den where to the Nymphs of old
Full many a thing didst thou hallow and good gifts an hundredfold;
And lo thou, Neritos yonder in woody raiment clad!"

So she spake, and the mist she scattered, and sight of the land he had;
And the toil-stout goodly Odysseus was glad, and in joy and mirth
Beheld the land that was his; and he kissed the corn-kind earth;
And unto the Nymphs thereafter he lifted his hands and prayed:

"O Naiad Nymphs, Zeus' Daughters, a while ago I said
That never more should I see you: now hail with my kindly prayers!

And gifts withal shall I give you as it was in the other years,
If the Daughter of Zeus, Spoil-driver, be kind that I may live,
And that my son belovèd hereafter wax and thrive."

But the Grey-eyed, the Goddess Athene, spake to him for her part:
"Be bold and of good courage, nor with these things vex thine heart!
But as now lay we thy chattels within the holy den,
That there they may bide thy coming all safe from other men.
And then let us fall to counsel how all may best be done."

Therewith she went down to the rock-den, shadowed over from the sun,
And searched out its hiding-places, while Odysseus brought all there,
The gold and the long-lived brass and the raiment woven fair,
Which those folk of the Phæacians to him e'en now had given;
But Pallas Athene, the Daughter of the shielded Zeus of heaven,
Stored all things well and duly, and a stone to the door did roll.
Then they sat them adown together by the holy olive bole;
And there for the masterful Wooers they devise the doom and the death;
And Pallas Athene beginneth, and the word she taketh and saith:

"O Zeus-bred son of Laertes, Odysseus of many a guile,
Think how on the shameless Wooers thou may'st lay thine hands in a while,
Who now these three years over have been masters in thine hall,
Wooing thy godlike helpmate and the wooing gifts giving withal;
While she, for ever lamenting thy late return in her heart,
Unto all of them giveth a hope, and to each man a promise apart,
Sending them many a message, while her mind means another thing."

Therewith the shifty Odysseus thus spake in his answering:
"Hah! e'en as Agamemnon, the son of Atreus, hath died,
Another such bane as baleful in my halls had I come to abide,

But if thou, O Goddess, had told me of those things in their verity;
But I prithee weave and devise it how of these avenged I may be;
And stand by me thyself and set in me that heart for the battle-joy
As wherewith we loosed aforetime the shining coif of Troy.
If thou stand beside me, O Grey-eyed, as battle-glad as then,
Forsooth would I hold the battle 'gainst thrice an hundred men,
With thee, O worshipped Goddess, so kind to bear me aid."

But the Grey-eyed, the Goddess Athene, she answered him and said:
"Yea, surely shall I be with thee, nor my presence shalt thou miss
When we fall to work hereover: and hereof my deeming is
That some one of those, the Wooers who eat thy livelihood,
Shall befoul the widespread hall-floor with the splash of brains and blood.
But come now, unknown shall I make thee to all of human kin;
On thy limbs, the round and lithesome, will I wither thy fair skin,
And the yellow locks on thine head will I waste, and do on thee a clout,
Which any man beholding shall loathe him that it wrappeth about;
And thine even will I blear over, that are now so fair and bright;
And so shalt thou seem but loathly unto the Wooers' sight,
Yea, and unto thy wife and thy child, whom thou leftst in thine hall on a day.
But first unto the swineherd do thou come upon thy way,
Who o'er all thy swine is master, and forgets not his kindness for thee,
And loveth thy son moreover and the wise Penelope.
Amidst his swine is he sitting, ye shall find them pasturing
Along by the rock of Corax and Arethusa the spring.
There eat they abundant acorns and drink of the water black,
Whereby are the swine so nourished that rich lard they nowise lack.
There bide thou, and be asking of all things as thou sittest there,
While I get me gone unto Sparta, the nurse of women fair,
That Telemachus I may summon, yea, him thy very son,
Who to wide-field Lacedæmon and Menelaüs has gone

To seek of thy fame and thy rumour, if yet alive ye be."

Spake the many-wiled Odysseus, and answered presently:
" Why then didst thou not tell him since thy mind all things doth know?
Wouldst thou have him also wandering and suffering grief and woe
On the sea that hath no harvest, while men eat his store away?"

But the Grey-eyed, the Goddess Athene, she fell to answer and say:
" Nay, let not thy mind, I bid thee, o'ermuch on him be set;
For I myself, I sent him, that fair fame he might get
Going elsewhere; and no labour he hath, but sitteth in peace
In the house of Menelaüs, wherein is all increase.
Forsooth in their black ship biding those youths do him waylay;
For him ere aback he cometh to his land they desire to slay.
But I do not think it shall be so, till the earth hold some of those
Among the men of the Wooers, who eat thy store so close."

So spake Athene, and touched him with the staff that she did bear,
And on his round limbs withered the skin that was fresh and fair,
And she wasted the yellow locks on his head; and his every limb,
The skin of an old man ancient she did it over him,
And bleared his eyen moreover that were so bright erewhile,
And she cast a foul clout on him, and a kirtle very vile,
All tattered and torn, and sullied with the smoke of the feasting-hall,
And a great bald skin of a stag swift-foot she cast o'er all,
And a staff therewith she gave him, and a scrip, an unseemly thing,
All tattered it was and foul, and slung by a twisted string.

So after the Council they parted, and She her way sped on
To Lacedæmon the holy to fetch Odysseus' son.

BOOK XIV.

ARGUMENT.

ODYSSEUS COMETH TO THE HOUSE OF EUMÆUS THE SWINEHERD IN THE SHAPE OF AN OLD STAFF-CARLE, AND IS KINDLY ENTERTAINED OF HIM: HE TELLETH EUMÆUS OF THE RETURN OF ODYSSEUS, BUT HATH NO CREDENCE OF HIM; THEREWITH HE TELLETH HIM A FEIGNED TALE OF HIMSELF: AND SO TO SUPPER AND BED IN THE HOUSE OF EUMÆUS.

THEREWITH he went up from the haven along by the rocky way
Of the fells and the woody places, whereby did Athene say
He should find the noble swineherd, who heeded his goods and his gear
Above all the thralls he had got him and all those of his house that were.
So, sitting in the doorway of the garth the man he found,
Where high aloft it was builded, well seen on a rising ground,
Great, fair, with a clear space round it: but the swineherd's very hand
Had builded the wall for the swine of his master aloof from the land,
And nought thereof his mistress or the old Laertes had known: [stone:
With great dragged stones had he built it, and with thorns had coped the
He had cleft the black of an oak-tree, and on every side all round 11
Stout stakes set close together he had driven into the ground;
And within the garth moreover twelve swine-styes had he done,
Good swine-beds near to each other, and there in every one
Were a fifty of earth-wallowers, the fruitful brood-sows, kept, [slept;
But the boars of the herd, withoutward from those sow-swine styes they
And fair fewer they were; for the Wooers, the god-great, evermore,
Would minish them by eating, and the swineherd sent of the store

The fattest and the likeliest of all the hog-kind there.
Three hundreds to wit, and sixty, of these same beasts there were;
And four hounds like wild beasts of the woodland beside them ever slept,
Which the swineherd, leader of menfolk, for that cause nourished and kept.

Now he himself fair sandals to his feet was fitting as then,
That were cut from a good sound oxhide, but as for the other men,
There were three that this and that way with the pasturing swine were gone;
But the fourth, perforce he had sent him his ways unto the town
To take a swine to the Wooers, that they the lordly great
Might hallow the beast, their souls with his flesh to satiate.

But the baying dogs on a sudden of Odysseus now caught sight
And ran upon him yelping; and he with practised sleight
Straight sat him down on the earth, and dropped his staff from his hand,
Yet ugly hurt had he suffered in this stead of his very land,
But thereupon the swineherd, with swift feet following on,
Straight gat him out through the entry and dropped the skin adown,
And chid the hounds, and thencefrom drave them this way and that
With plenteous stones cast quickly: and he spake to the King thereat:

"Old man, it lacked but a little that the dogs had thee undone
In sudden wise; and thereafter of thee a shame had I won.
And forsooth of woe and wailing God giveth me enow,
Since in grief for a godlike master do I abide in woe,
While his fatted swine I nourish for other men to eat,
And he belike sore craving for e'en a morsel of meat,
Strays through the alien cities and the far folk many an one,
If yet indeed he liveth and looketh on the sun.
But come thou home to the booth, old man, that thou in the stead,
Having quenched thine own heart's longing for the meal of wine and bread,

May'st tell us whence thou comest and what woe thou bearest withal.''

So spake the goodly swineherd and led him home to the hall,
And brought him and set him adown, and leaved twigs 'neath him spread,
And the skin of a shaggy wild-goat thereover, which he for a bed
Did use for its hairy bigness; and glad was Odysseus at heart
That suchwise he gave him guesting, and therewith spake on his part:

"May Zeus and the other Deathless, O Stranger, give to thee
All that which thou most desirest, since so kind thou takest me."

But therewith Eumæus the Swineherd, he answered him and said:
"O guest, it were not rightful, though e'en worser than thou he were sped,
To put shame upon a stranger; since guests and bedesmen all,
From Zeus they are; and our giving, although it be but small,
Is dear; for the wont 'tis of thrall-folk to be timorous day by day
When young men are their masters and over them bear sway.
Ah verily that man's homefare the Gods perforce have stayed
Who would have cherished me dearly, and given me gear to aid,
An acre and an homestead, and a wife that many woo;
Such gifts as a king belovèd his man will give unto,
Who hath toiled and earned good increase by the labour of his hand;
As forsooth has this my toiling wherein I stoutly stand.
Yea much had my king availed me, had he waxen old in his place.
—He is gone; and would that Helen had gone with all her race!
Since for many a man and many wrought she loosening of the knees,
And for Agamemnon's glory went this man across the seas,
Unto Ilios rich in horses with the men of Troy to fight."

So saying, with a girdle he girt himself aright,
And went unto the swine-styes where penned were the piglings' crew,

Whence he took and brought out twain, and both he hallowed and slew,
And scalded, and sheared them piecemeal, and spitted all the meat,
And roasted all and bore it, and set forth for Odysseus to eat,
All hot from the very spits, with the barley white besprent.
And therewith in a cup of ivy heart-gladdening wine he blent,
And sat down over against him, and bade to the meat and spake:

"Eat now, O guest, of the piglings, which are for the thralls to take;
For of the hogs well fatted eat the Wooers day by day,
With no thought in their hearts of the vengeance; nor any pity have they.
Yet the happy Gods, they love not such headlong frowardness,
But the righteous dooms of menfolk and their seemly deeds they bless.
Yea the foemen of the aliens, when they fall upon the land,
And Zeus to them is giving the prey unto their hand,
And they fill their ships for departing that they may get them home,—
'Mid the hearts of e'en these there falleth strong fear of the wrath to come.
But somewhat these Wooers are wotting, or have heard some God maybe
Tell of his piteous ending; so nowise righteously
Will they woo, or get them homewards; but ever in peace they sit
And eat up the wealth in their pride, and spare not any whit.
For as many as are the nights and the days that of Zeus are won
No day but one beast do they hallow, nor ever but two alone:
And his wine will they waste in their riot; in their mastery is it poured;
For indeed was his treasure boundless, nor the like hath any lord
Of the black fields of the mainland, nor yet in Ithaca here;
Nay not twenty men together have such abundant gear.
And to thee will I now be telling what wealth the man doth keep:
He hath twelve herds on the mainland, and as many flocks of sheep,
And of droves of swine as many, and of goat-flocks scattering wide,
E'en such as strangers look to and his own house-carles beside,
But here at the island's outmost, wide-wandering goat-flocks feed,

Eleven in all, and herdsmen of the best their pasture heed;
And daily adown to the Wooers by each man thereof is sped
Of the fatted goats whichever may seem the likeliest head.
But watch and ward am I keeping o'er these same swine ye see,
And ever I cull and send them the fattest that there be."

So he spake; but Odysseus in silence ate greedily and drank,
While still in his heart for the Wooers the evil sprouted rank;
But when he had supped and his soul with the meat was lustier grown,
Eumæus filled and handed the cup that was his own,
And he took it filled with the wine, and his heart rejoiced at the thing;
And therewith he spake to the other, and set a word on the wing:

"O friend, and what man was it with his chattels bought thee then,
This man of whom thou tellest so rich amidst of men?
And for Agamemnon's glory as thou say'st his bane he got.
Tell me, because it may be that of such a man I wot;
Zeus knoweth alone and the others, the Gods that deathless abide.
But I may have seen him to tell of, since I wander far and wide."

But the swineherd, the leader of folk, thuswise did he answer and say:
"Old man, no wanderer's story of the man shall now make way
Unto the hope of his helpmate, or his well-belovèd son:
For wandering men, men needy of victuals, many an one,
Would be lying hereof, nought wishful the very sooth to say;
And every gangrel body that to Ithaca chanceth to stray,
Unto the Queen he cometh, and a false tale telleth withal;
And she taketh him in with all kindness, and searcheth into it all;
And she mourneth, and down from her eyelids ever the tear-drops run,
As women will do for a husband in far lands dead and gone.
And thou too belike, old man, might fashion a tale indeed

If any should give thee raiment, a coat and a cloak to thy need.
But the dogs, and the fowl swift-fleeting, this long while now have reft
The skin from the bones of this man, and his soul the body hath left.
Or the fish of the sea have devoured him, and his bones cast up aland,
High up on the shore are lying rolled round in plenteous sand.
There then he died, and thenceforward for his friends who are left behind
Breeds sorrow, and chiefly for me ; for nevermore shall I find
Another so kindly a master, wherever I go or may come ;
Nay, not if I got me again to my father and mother and home,
And the house wherein I was born, and the folk that cherished me.
Nor so much for them do I sorrow, though fain were I to be
Once more in the land of my fathers, and behold them with mine eyes,
As I long for Odysseus departed ; and anigh to my soul it lies.
Yea, for awe I scarce may name him, O guest, though he be not here ;
For me in his heart he cherished, and held me lief and dear.
My lord beworshipped I call him, though far away he be."

But the toil-stout goodly Odysseus in thiswise answered he :
"Since utterly thou gainsayest, O friend, nor will have it so
That ever the man shall come back, and thy soul no trust doth know,
So now no longer I say it, but with an oath I swear
That e'en now Odysseus cometh ; so give me a guerdon dear
For my tidings then when he cometh aback to his house and his hall,
And do on me goodly raiment, a cloak and a kirtle withal.
But ere then I would not take it for as needy as I be ;
For that man is no less loathsome than the Gates of Hell to me,
Who 'neath the pinch of lacking babbleth a lying word.
Bear witness, Zeus the Arch-god, and this guest-loving board,
And the hearth of the glorious Odysseus whereunto I have come,
That all this that I have told of, the days shall bring it home.
Hither shall come Odysseus ere yet this year be sped ;

Yea with this moon's last waning, when the new moon stands in its stead,
Then home shall he be gotten, and shall wreak him on each one
Who now befouleth the honour of his wife and his noble son."

Then didst thou, O Swineherd Eumæus, thereto make answer and say:
"Old man, thy meed of good tidings God wot I shall never pay,
Nor ever shall come Odysseus: so drink thy wine in peace
And mind we other matters: mind we no more of these.
For grieved is the heart within me nor merry is my mood
When any man is telling of my trusty king and good.
So now let the oath go by us—Yet might but Odysseus be,
And home as my heart would have it and the heart of Penelope,
And Laertes the Elder of days, and Telemachus godlike and fair!
—Yet ah! for the child that Odysseus begot, in my sorrow I wear.
For the Gods Telemachus nourished as a blossoming shoot of the earth,
And I said to myself that midst men he should be no worser of worth
Than erst was his father belovèd, of body so marvellous made.
But now some one of the Deathless his wit once evenly weighed
Hath marred, or some one of menfolk: he hath gone some tidings to get
Of his father to Pylos the Holy; and the masterful Wooers beset
His homeward way with an ambush, that from Ithaca root and rod
May the stock of Arceisius perish, and his name that was great as a God.
Let-a-be! whether he be taken, or escape from these men may get!
And may the Son of Cronos his hand hold over him yet!
But now, old man, I bid thee of thine own trouble to tell;
And give out all things soothly that I may know it well.
Whence art thou then of menfolk? what thy city and thy kin? [win
In what fashion of keel cam'st thou hither, by what way did the shipmen
That unto Ithaca brought thee, and for what did they give themselves out?
For that thou camest not hither afoot I may not doubt."

So the many counselled Odysseus now fell to answer and say:
"Yea, of all these things will I tell thee as straightly as I may:
If now for a while were with us both meat and honey-sweet wine,
And we in peace a-feasting within this booth of thine,
While other men fall to it the deeds afield to do,
Then lightly might I be telling my tale the whole year through,
Nor yet an end be making of the story of the ill
And the heart-grief laid upon me, worn through by God's own will.

"Of the kin do I declare me of the men of Crete the wide,
The son of a man that was wealthy: but many sons beside
Gotten in lawful wedlock in his house were born and bred,
While a bought thrall was my mother and bore me all unwed.
Yet e'en as his sons begotten in wedlock he honoured me,
Castor, the son of Hylax, of whose blood I boast me to be.
Amidst the folk of the Cretans as a God was he honoured by all
For his happy wife and his riches, and his noble sons and tall:
But the Fates of Death fell on him, and him away they bare
Unto the House of Hades, and his sons straight fell to share
His livelihood amongst them, and the lots thereover threw.
But to me they gave but a little, and gave me a house thereto,
And a wife I wedded befitting wide-landed men and high;
And that because of my valour, for indeed no dastard was I,
And no blencher from the battle—all now has departed and gone,
And yet when ye look on the straw ye may deem of the harvest won;
But sorrow in all plenty hath long encompassed my ways.
Well; Ares and Athene gave me boldness in those days,
And the might to break the battle, and when for the ambush I chose
The best of the men, and was sowing great bale against the foes,
Nought then my noble spirit forbode the death anear,
But leaping out the foremost, I would smite down with the spear

Such men of the foe as in swiftness of foot to me must yield.
Such was I then in the battle: but I loved no work afield,
Nor yet the thrift of the household that noble race doth rear;
But the ships well dight with oars to me were ever dear,
And shafts of war well shaven, and darts, and the battle-play;
Things baleful, wherefrom others would shrink and shudder away.
But these things God set in my soul, and to me were they goodly gain,
For one man in this delighteth, and of that is another fain.

"Now ere we sons of Achæans went up to the Trojan land,
Nine times the ships swift-faring, and the men I had in hand
To lead 'gainst the alien menfolk, and much good I happed on there;
And thereof I took what liked me, and thereafter had my share
By lot; and my house was holpen and waxed great there and then,
And mighty I waxed and beworshipped amidst the Cretan men.
But when to that way so loathly doomed us far-seeing Zeus
Whereby the knees of a many and a many men grew loose,
Men bade me and Idomeneus the noble and renowned
To lead the ships unto Ilios, nor might a means be found
Whereby we might gainsay it; for the folks' voice pressed us hard.
So then we sons of Achæans thereby for nine years warred,
But the tenth the city of Priam with war we wasted out
And went home with our ships, and God the Achæans scattered about,
But wise Zeus for me the hapless devised the bale and the bane.

"For one month only I bided at home of my children fain,
And my wealth and my wife; and thereafter my heart pressed hard on me
Unto the land of Egypt to sail across the sea,
In ships dight well and goodly with my godlike company.
Nine ships I arrayed, and in haste the people gathered thereby.
Six days my trusty fellows sat with me there at the feast,

And therewithal I gave them full many a slaughter-beast
Wherewith the Gods to worship, and wherewith to dight the board,
But the seventh day we departed on our way from Crete the broad.
We sailed on swift and softly with a north wind fresh and fair,
As though down stream we were dropping, and no ship of mine that was there
Took hurt, and so all scathless and hale we sat at ease,
And the wind and the helmsmen bore us the right way o'er the seas.

"So to Egypt the sweet-flowing we came on the fifth fair day,
And in that river of Egypt my bowed ships did I lay;
Then I charged my trusty fellows and gave them strait command
That they by the ships should be biding and draw them high aland;
And the watchers I bade betake them to the watching steads and the height,
But they yielded to fierce folly and went after the lusts of their might.
The fair fields of the men of Egypt they fell to plunder and spoil,
And bore off the women and children and slew the men in the broil.
So speedily unto the city came the rumour and the cry,
And men heard the shout and gathered when dawn was in the sky,
And the horsemen and the footmen were over all the plain,
And the light of brass a-flashing; yea, and Zeus the Thunder-fain
Cast ill fear amidst my fellows, and no hardy heart was found
To face the play and abide it; for stark bale stood around.
So there with the whetted brass a many they slew in the stead,
And a many to live in thraldom away from the field they led.

"But for me did Zeus in my mind a rede and a counsel raise
—Though would that there I had perished and met the fate of my days
In Egypt-land, for more sorrow the time to come waylaid.—
Well, there on the field from my head I doft the helm well made,
And put off the shield from my shoulders, and the spear adown did I fling,
And I went and stood over against them, the horses of the king,

And took his knees and kissed them, and he pitied and saved me from doom,
And set me in his chariot and brought me weeping home,
Though many an one made at me with the ashen-shafted spear,
All eager for my slaying, for exceeding wroth they were;
But he warded them off, for he dreaded the wrath of the Stranger's Speed,
Guest-aiding Zeus, who of all Gods is wroth with the evil deed.

"There seven years I abided and gat me plenteous gear
At the hands of the men of Egypt, for all men gave to me there.
But when the eighth year's circle came on in its due while
I met a man Phœnician, well-learned in lying guile,
A huckster, who for menfolk a many evils wrought;
And he by his wit wrought on me, and me from thence he brought
Until we came to Phœnicia, where lay his house and gear.
So there with him I abided for the full space of a year,
But when the time was fulfilled by the wane of the months and the days,
And the year came round in order, and the seasons came their ways,
For Lybia then he shipped me in a keel that plied the sea,
Under colour of lies, that I with him a shipper of wares should be;
But thither would he flit me for a great price me to sell:
So with him on the ship must I get me, though I deemed all was not well.
So she ran on under the North wind that blew fresh over the main,
And the midmost sea of the Cretans: but Zeus did their end ordain,
For when Crete was left behind us we opened no new land,
And nought but the sea and the heavens there was on either hand.
Then over our hollow ship the Son of Cronos drew
A coal-blue cloud, and beneath it all black the sea-waves grew.
And therewithal Zeus thundered o'er the ship with a thunder-stroke,
And by his bolt sore smitten through all her frame she shook,
And filled was she of brimstone, and outboard the men were thrown,
And like unto the seamews round the black ship were they strown

In the wash of the waves; and their homefare did the God for all undo.

"But the very Zeus gave to me amidst my weary woe
The great mast, stout, unyielding, which had served the black-bowed ship;
Yea, unto my hands he gave it, that through the toils I might slip.
So thereto I clung, and drifted with the winds in their baleful might.
Nine days o'er the sea I drifted, but on the tenth black night
A mighty billow rolled me high on the Thesprotian strand;
Where Pheidon, king of Thesprotians, the hero of the land,
Did unbought guesting give me: for his dear son happed on me
Foredone with cold and labour, and brought me home from the sea.
For he lifted me up with his hand to go to his father's hall,
And raiment he did upon me, a cloak and a kirtle withal.

"And there did I hear of Odysseus: for he gave me to understand
That him had he guested and cherished on his way to his fatherland.
And the heap of wealth he showed me that Odysseus thither had brought,
Of brass, and of gold, and of iron most fine, and deftly wrought,
Yea, unto his tenth generation would it serve for livelihood.
So heaped in the halls of King Pheidon lay that treasure great and good.
He had gone, they said, to Dodona, the counsel of Zeus to hear,
From the oak-tree of the Godhead that aloft his boughs doth bear,
As to how he might win returning, who had been so long away
From the Ithacan land the wealthy, close hid, or in face of the day.
But the King, as he poured to the Gods in his house, made oath unto me
That the ship was drawn down to the strand, and the shipmen all ready
That should ferry over Odysseus to his well-loved fatherland. [for sea,
But ere that therefrom he sped me, for a keel there came to hand
Of Thesprotian men a-wending to Dulichium's wheat-land fair,
And he charged them straitly to bring me to King Acastus there.
But their hearts of an evil counsel were fain concerning me,

That on my grief abiding might be heaped mere misery.

" For when the ship seafaring from the land was gotten far out,
Then straight the day of my thraldom they devised to bring about:
For they stripped me of my raiment, my cloak and kirtle fair,
And did a foul clout on me, and a kirtle ill to wear;
These loathly rags which e'en now beneath thine eyes have been.
So at last they came to the acres of Ithaca clear-seen,
And there in the ship the well-decked they bound me strait and hard
With well-laid ropes; and outboard they gat them afterward,
And made haste to get their supper adown by the side of the sea.

" But meanwhile the Gods themselves undid my bonds for me
Full easily: then wrapping my head in a clout of a hood
Down the steering-oar well shaven I got me and breasted the flood,
And swimming on thenceforward I rowed with either hand,
And right soon afar was I gotten from those, and out aland;
And, coming ashore by a thicket of leafy trees well-grown,
I lay there close while they wandered about and made their moan;
But whenas they deemed it availed not to seek me further there,
To the hollow ship did they get them and thereon again did fare.
And the Gods themselves thenceforward did lightly hide me still,
And then brought me away to the homestead of a man of all goodwill,
Because forsooth it is fated that I yet shall live my day."

Then thou, O Swineherd Eumæus, thuswise didst answer and say:
" O hapless guest, thou hast moved me and stirred my heart with thy tale
Of all the ways thou hast wandered, and all thou hast borne of bale.
But the word thou say'st of Odysseus 'tis wrong and said athwart,
Nor wilt thou make me trow it: and thou being as thou art,
Why wilt thou lie so vainly? since for my part well I know

Of the homefare of my master, that the Gods begrudge him so,
That they brought him not to his bane down there on the Trojan ground,
Nor yet mid the hands of his fellows when the spindle of war he had
When all the host of Achæans the tomb for him had done, [wound,
And fame he had got, and great glory had left behind for his son.
But now without fame or glory have the Snatchers whirled him away.
But for me aloof with the swine I abide, nor any day
Do I get me adown to the city, save the wise Penelope
Should stir me up to go thither when to hand some tidings may be.
Then the folk there sit about him and will have out all his say;
Both those that are grieved that the master so long abideth away,
And those that rejoice all bootless to eat up his livelihood.
But for me, to ask and to question I hold it nothing good,
Since the time when a man of Ætolia came here with a tale in hand,
And befooled me: a man had he slain, and traversed a deal of land,
And hither he came to the homestead, and I dealt with him lovingly.
Who said that amidst the Cretans with Idomeneus did he see
Odysseus mending his ships by the tempest broken and tried;
And he said that he would be coming in the spring or the harvest tide,
And with him his godlike fellows, and he bringing abundant gear.
But thou Elder of many sorrows, since the God hath brought thee here
Take not delight in lying, nor flatter me thus one whit;
For I give thee not compassion, nor cherish thee for it,
But in awe of Zeus the Guest-friend, and for very pity of thee."

Then spake the shifty Odysseus, and thuswise answered he:
"Well, well! the heart within thee is slack indeed to trow,
Since mine oath will nowise win thee, nor wilt thou trust me now.
But strike we here a bargain! For yet I say again,
Let the Gods who hold Olympus bear witness of us twain!
If yet thy King returneth, in his house and his home to be,

Thou shalt give me a cloak and a kirtle, and withal shalt further me
Unto Dulichium island, wherein I fain would dwell.
But if thy King return not e'en as the tale I tell,
Set on thine homemen to cast me adown from an hill-rock high,
That gangrel men henceforward look to it not to lie."

But therewith the goodly swineherd he answered him and spake:
"Yea verily, guest, my fair fame for honour and kindness' sake
Should be holpen among menfolk, both now and in time to come,
If, when to the stead I had brought thee and guested thee at home,
I should turn again and slay thee, and thy dear life take away!
Unto Zeus the Son of Cronos full heartily then should I pray!
But now 'tis the time for supper; soon now shall my folk come in,
That in the booth fair supper and dainty we may win."

But while about such matters each unto each they spoke,
Lo near at hand were the swine-droves, and withal the herding-folk:
So therewithal they penned them where they were wont to abide,
And huge rose the din and the routing of the swine as they were styed.

But now the goodly swineherd fell to bid his men and say:
"The best of the swine bring hither for me to hallow and slay
For my far-come guest; and we also will make good cheer indeed,
Since for long have we been toiling the white-toothed swine to feed,
And others eat our labour, nor cometh atonement to pass."

So he spake, and fell to cleaving the logs with the ruthless brass,
And a boar they brought withinward, a five-year-old full fat,
And on the hearth they stood him, and the swineherd nought forgat
The Deathless Gods, for his heart in righteous ways was fast.
So he fell to, and into the fire the forelock first he cast

Of the white-toothed boar, and fell praying to the Godfolk one and all
For the wise Odysseus' homefare in the end to his house and his hall.
Then with an oak-log that lay there, once cleft by his hand he smote
The boar, and life went from him; and therewith they sheared his throat,
And singed, and cut him piece-meal; and the swineherd laid the raw
On the rich fat, which in gobbets from each limb did he draw;
And some they cast into the fire besprent with barley-meal,
And the rest they sheared into gobbets and spitted every deal,
And roasted it very deftly, and then they drew off all,
And cast it heaped on the trenchers. Then rose up the swineherd withal
To carve the meat, for he wotted in his heart what was fair and fit,
And into seven portions he dealt the whole of it,
And one thereof to the Nymphs and to Hermes, Maia's Son,
He set by with a prayer, and the others he dealt to every one.
But the long-drawn chine of the boar white-toothed for the worshipful part
He gave unto Odysseus, and the King grew glad at heart,
And the many-wiled Odysseus he spake, and thus said he:

"Eumæus, to Zeus the Father may'st thou be e'en as dear as to me,
Since with goodly cheer dost thou honour e'en such as I am today!"

Then thou, O Swineherd Eumæus, thereto didst answer and say:
"Eat then, O hapless of strangers! in such as is here delight!
For God to one man giveth, and another gainsayeth outright,
In such wise as he will have it; for all things he doth and he may."

So he spake, and burned the firstlings to the Gods of the deathless day,
And poured the dark wine in offering and gave it furthermore
To the hands of the City-waster, as his portion he sat before. [alone
And the bread was Mesaulios' dealing, whom the swineherd had bought
What time the King his master was aloof and a long while gone:

And neither the Queen nor Laertes the Elder were wotting of this,
But he bought the man from the Taphians with the gear that was verily his.
So they stretched out their hands to the victual that ready before them lay.
But when the longing for meat and for drink they had done away
Mesaulios bore off the victual, and fulfilled of meat and of bread
They were gotten fain of slumber, and longed for lying abed.
But the night came foul and moonless, with Zeus to raining set,
And a mighty west wind blowing, that ever bringeth wet;
So to them then spake Odysseus the herder of swine to try
If the cloak from his back he would give him, or of his folk thereby
Would egg on one to give it, since of him he had a care:

"Now hearken ye, Eumæus, and all our fellows here,
And a boasting word will I say; for befooling wine is strong
Within me: he who eggeth e'en the wise to raise the song
And laugh out softly, and dance for very lustihead,
And to say the word, it may be, that were better left unsaid,
Yet since I have shouted already, the speech I will not hide.
But O for the days of my youth when with me did the might abide!
When we arrayed an ambush up under Troy-town wall,
And Menelaüs Atrides, and Odysseus led, and withal
The third was I of the captains, for that charge on me they laid.
Now when round the burg high-builded and the wall our watch we made,
Then we lay about the city and adown in the thickets there,
Among the reeds of the marish, close crouching under our gear.
But the north-wind dropped and the night-tide came, a foul and an evil time,
Frosty, with snow a-falling, as bitter as the rime,
And into ice was it setting upon our shields of war.
And now for all the others, both kirtle and cloak they bore,
And with their shoulders shielded all close at ease they lay:
But I, when I went with my fellows, had left my cloak by the way,

Like a fool; for I had no deeming of such a bitter night,
And I went with nought but my target, and my war-coat gleaming bright.
So in the third hour of the night-tide, when the stars were shifting their [way,
I spake unto Odysseus, who close beside me lay,
And jogged him with my elbow, and lightly gave he heed:

"'O many-wiled Odysseus, Zeus-bred, Laertes' seed,
Not long shall I be with the living, for I perish with the cold,
Whereas no cloak I have gotten, for the God hath me befooled
To go all bare in my kirtle, and now no rede may I find.'

"So I spake, but therewith straightway grew up a rede in his mind;
Such an one as he was for counsel and for fighting in the fray!
So speaking very softly this word to me did he say:
'Be silent, lest some other of Achæans may have heard!'
Then he raised up his head on his elbow, and therewith spake a word:

"'Friends, hearken! a boding vision in my sleep hath come to me;
And far away from the ships are we gotten: might some one be
To go tell to the People's Shepherd, Agamemnon Atreus' son,
That he push on the men from the ships to gather and speed us on!'

"Then Thoas, son of Andræmon, at his word rose speedily,
And cast away from off him his cloak of purple dye,
And off to the ships ran swiftly, and I his cloak did on,
And fain therein was I lying till the Gold-throned Day-dawn shone.
Ah, would that I yet were as young, and of might untouched and stout!
Then would one of the homestead's swineherds soon give me a cloak, no [doubt,
Both for kindness and for compassion of a very man maybe.
But now foul-clad is my body, and men think shame of me."

Then thou, O swineherd Eumæus, didst answer and speak forth :
" Old man, the tale thou tellest forsooth is one of worth ;
Nor speak'st thou out of measure a vain and empty tale.
As now shalt thou lack not a garment, nor aught else that may avail,
A poor and hapless bedesman wandering from stead to town.
But tomorn shalt thou shake upon thee the rags that are thine own,
For nowise cloaks a many or change of coats to wear
Have we, but just one kirtle for every man to bear.
But when at last he cometh, Odysseus' well-loved son,
A kirtle and cloak shall he give thee, that fair raiment thou may'st don,
And shall speed thy ways wherever thy heart and soul desire."

So he spake and arose, and strewed him a bed beside the fire,
And the fells of sheep and the goat-kind withal he heaped thereto,
And there Odysseus laid him ; and a cloak o'er him he threw,
Shaggy and great, that stood him in stead for a change of gear
When raging wind and weather rose up against them there.

There then Odysseus slumbered, and him withal beside
The young men lay ; but the swineherd it liked not to abide
And slumber on that bed-place, and aloof from his swine to be :
So he armed him, and went outdoors ; and Odysseus joyed to see
The man of his goods so heedful, when far away was his lord.
First then o'er his sturdy shoulders he slung the whetted sword,
And then in a thick cloak clad him from the wind to ward him well,
And the skin of a goat well-nourished caught up, a shaggy fell.
And withal a whetted javelin 'gainst men and dogs he bare,
And went his ways to slumber where his swine the white-toothed were,
All sleeping 'neath a rock-den in a north-wind-warded lair.

BOOK XV.

ARGUMENT.

TELEMACHUS, EGGED ON BY ATHENE, DEPARTETH HOMEWARDS FROM LACEDÆMON; HE FALLETH IN WITH THEOCLYMENUS THE SEER ON THE WAY, AND COMETH SAFELY TO ITHACA, WHERE HE GOETH A-LAND BY HIMSELF IN THE COUNTRY-SIDE, AND SENDETH THE SHIP HOME TO THE TOWN WITH HIS FELLOWS. MEANWHILE EUMÆUS TELLETH HIS TALE TO ODYSSEUS OF HOW HE WAS STOLEN FROM HOME WHEN HE WAS LITTLE, AND SOLD INTO THRALDOM.

BUT to wide-field Lacedæmon did Pallas Athene speed,
Unto the noble youngling, great-souled Odysseus' seed,
To mind him of his homefare, and urge him to be gone.
And there Telemachus found she and Nestor's noble son
Both lying in the forecourt of Menelaüs the great.
Forsooth the Son of Nestor lay bound by slumber's weight,
But sweet sleep held not the other, for his heart as there he lay
Was stirred by care and trouble for his father far away:
So to him spake the Grey-eyed Athene as nigh to him she stood:

"Telemachus, thy straying from thine house is nothing good,
And thy leaving aloof thy havings and those men within the hall
So masterful past measure, lest of thee they eat up all,
And share out all thy living, and nought be the end of thy way.
Up! urge on Menelaüs, loud-voiced in the battle-play,
To speed thee off; that thy mother at home ye yet may find—
—For now her father and mother, they bid her heed their mind

And with Eurymachus wed her; for he outgoes all of these,
The Wooers, in his giving, and the gifts doth he still increase—
Lest against thy will she be flitting from thine house some deal of thy gear.
Since indeed thou wottest of women what minds in their bodies they bear,
She is fain to be good to the household of the man that her hath wed;
But of her offspring aforetime and of her husband dead
She nothing now remembers, and seeketh of him not.
So do thou thyself go thither, and give all that thou hast got
To be kept by one of the handmaids who seemeth the best to be,
Till a noble wife and a fitting the Gods shall show to thee.
Now another word will I tell thee, and lay it well to heart;
Men wilfully waylay thee, the best of the Wooers' part,
Where the Ithacan firth hath Samé the craggy on one hand,
Desiring there to slay thee ere thou come to thy fatherland.
Yet I deem it shall not happen ere the earth hold some of those,
The Wooers, that devour thy livelihood so close.
But hold aloof from the islands thy ship well-wrought for the sea,
And sail by night as by day time, and fair wind abaft shall there be,
Sent from that one of the Deathless who keeps thee evermore.
But when to the ness thou comest, the first ness of the Ithacan shore,
Then thy ship and all the shipmen to the city do thou send,
But thyself the first of all things unto the swineherd wend,
Who wardeth thy swine, and all kindness as erst for thee doth show.
There night-long be thou abiding, but let him to the city go,
To Penelope the prudent, a tiding word to tell,
How thou art come from Pylos and at home alive and well."

So she spake, and thus departed for Olympus high aloft:
But he roused the son of Nestor from his slumber sweet and soft;
For with his heel he stirred him and thuswise there he spoke:

"Awake, thou Son of Nestor! arise, that we may yoke
To the car the whole-hoofed horses, and wear the way amain."

But Pisistratus, son of Nestor, to him made answer again:
"Telemachus, now in nowise, as sore as we long for the way,
May we drive through the dusky night-tide; but soon will come the day:
Abide till the hero Atrides, the glory of the spear,
Shall come, and in our twi-car shall lay the gifts and the gear,
And with kindly word shall bespeak us, and speed us on our ways,
Since forsooth the guest remembereth that man for all his days
Who giveth him good guesting in friendly wise and dear."

And even with his speaking was the Gold-throned Dawning there,
And anear drew Menelaüs, loud-voiced in the battle-play,
E'en now from the bed arisen where the fair-haired Helen lay;
But when the loved son of Odysseus of Atreus' son had sight,
He hasted and did on his body a kirtle gleaming bright;
Yea, Telemachus the hero, godlike Odysseus' son,
Over his sturdy shoulders a great cloak then did on,
And therewith went without doors, and stood nigh and spake the word:

"Menelaüs, Son of Atreus, thou Zeus-bred people's lord,
Now speed me forth, I prithee, to my fatherland and home;
For now my soul desireth that thither I should come."

Then answered Menelaüs, loud-voiced in the battle-play:
"Telemachus, no long season would I hold thee aback from the way,
Desiring so thine homefare; yea, wroth were I with such
As who, when men he guesteth, shall cherish his guest o'ermuch,
Or loath him out of measure: for in all things measure is best.
And good is neither fashion, to thrust out the willing guest

Who is fain to abide, or to stay him who longeth to be on the road;
But to cherish the guest that abideth and to speed the departer is good.
But abide till I bring to thy twi-car the gifts that are lovely and fair, [here,
That thou with thine eyes may'st behold them, and speak with the women
And bid them dight thee the dinner from the plentiful store of the hall.
For a worshipful thing it is, and befitting and gainful withal,
For you to depart full-feasted o'er the wide land having no end;
But would ye turn up through Hellas, or through Mid-Argos wend,
So far with you would I wend me, and the steeds for you would yoke;
And would lead you through men's cities; nor would any one of the folk
Send us empty away, but would give us some thing that were good to bear,
Some bowl maybe, or a caldron three-footed, brazen and fair,
Or else a golden beaker, or a yoke of mules maybe."

But Telemachus the heedful made answer, and thus spake he:
"Menelaüs, lord of the people, thou Atreus' son Zeus-bred,
To mine own would I now be wending, for when we left our stead
No guard I left behind me to heed my wealth and gear;
Nor would I die in my seeking my father lief and dear,
Or lose some one of the heirlooms within mine house that lie."

So when Menelaüs heard him, the good at the battle-cry,
He bade his wife and the women the work at once to win,
And to dight in the hall a dinner from the plenteous store within,
And Boethus' son Eteoneus, he drew anigh them withal,
Having risen from bed; for his dwelling was no great way from the hall.
So Menelaüs the war-loud straight bade him kindle the fire,
And roast the flesh, and he hearkened nor gainsaid his desire.
Then wended the King adown to his chamber sweet of scent,
And not alone, for with him Megapenthes and Helen went;
And when they came where the treasure was lying garnered up,

Then took the son of Atreus a twofold-fashioned cup,
And he bade his son Megapenthes a silver bowl to bear.
But for Helen, she stood by the coffers that hid away the gear,
The many-coloured kirtles which she herself had made.
One then took that Glory of Women from the store together laid,
The fairest of its broidery and the biggest and the best,
And it shone aloof as a star shines, and lay under all the rest.
Then forth through the house they wended till they came to Telemachus,
And the yellow Menelaüs he spake unto him thus:

"Telemachus, thine homefare, as thou wouldst have it be,
May Zeus the Lord of Here, Loud-Thunderer, give it thee!
But of gifts whatso of treasure within mine house there lies
I will give thee now the goodliest and the very most of price.
Lo, I give thee a bowl fair-fashioned withinward and without
Of silver; but his wine-lip with gold is done about.
It was fashioned by Hephæstus, and Phædimus the King
Of Sidonians gave it unto me, whom his house was covering,
When I was about departing; and this for thee have I brought."

Then the hero, the Seed of Atreus, the beaker double-wrought
Gave into his hands, and the wine-bowl of silver glorious fair
Brought the mighty Megapenthes and gave it to him there.
And withal the fair-cheeked Helen before him there did stand,
And spake the word unto him with the garment in her hand.

"And I withal will give thee a gift, O youngling dear,
Of Helen's hands a memory, this weed for thy wife to wear
In the hour of thy longed-for wedding: but meanwhile until that day
Let it lie in the house by thy mother. Hail now upon thy way
To thine house the goodly-builded, and the land that thy fathers had!"

So in his hands she laid it, and he took it and was glad;
And Pisistratus the hero stowed all away with care
In the coffer of the twi-car, and well noted what they were.
But yellow-haired Menelaüs to the house led one and all,
And they sat them adown on the benches and the high-seats of the hall,
And in a goodly ewer of gold a handmaid bore
The water for washing the hands o'er a silver bowl to pour,
And therewithal beside them the polished bowl she spread,
And thereto the reverend goodwife bore in and laid the bread,
And rejoiced their hearts with the dainties a many that happened there:
And there the son of Boethus dight the flesh and dealt the share.
But the pourer of wine was the son of Menelaüs renowned,
So they reached out their hands to the meat that ready before them they found.
But when the longing for meat and for drink they had quite foredone,
Then Telemachus the heedful and Nestor's noble son
Fell to yoking of their horses, and went up on the painted car,
And they drave from out of the forecourt and the cloister echoing far,
And with them went fair Menelaüs, son of Atreus, holding up
Heart-soothing wine in his right hand in a goodly golden cup,
That those on their way might wend them with due drink-offering poured,
And he stood before the horses, and hailed them with the word:

"Hail, younglings! and to Nestor the folk-herd let it pass
My greeting, for e'en as a father full kind to me he was,
While under Troy we battled, we sons of Achæan men."

But Telemachus the heedful thus spake and answered again:
"Yea surely, O Zeus-nourished, of all these things will we tell,
And thy tale to the man when we meet him: and would that I as well
Unto Ithaca returning might meet Odysseus yet,
And in his house might tell him what love from thee I met

When hither I came; and my going with so many gifts and fair."

But amidst his words came flying on his right a fowl of the air,
An erne, that bore in his talons a great goose white and tame
From out the garth, and behind him shouting aloud there came
A crowd of men and women; but anigh them to the right
He swept athwart the horses; and all they that saw the sight
Were glad, and in their bosoms their hearts waxed warm withal.
But Pisistratus, son of Nestor, first unto speech did fall:

"Say now, Zeus-bred Menelaüs, folk-leader, how it may be,
Hath Zeus shown forth this token for us, or rather for thee?"

So he spake, but Menelaüs the loved of Ares weighed
His thought, how best and rightly his answer might be made,
But him long-kirtled Helen forewent, and thus spake she:

"Hearken while I foretell it how in the soul of me
The Deathless set foreseeing; and I think it shall come to pass,
As this fowl hath come from the mountain where his folk and his father [was,
And hath ravished the goose that was cherished in the house in tender wise:
So Odysseus, though wide wandering through many miseries,
Shall come back to his house and avenge him—yea, is he home by now,
And bale for all those Wooers is nourishing to grow."

Then Telemachus the heedful spake out the answering word:
"So grant it Zeus, the Holy, Here's Loud-thundering Lord!
Then forsooth as a very God e'en there would I worship thee."

So he cast the whip on the horses, and as swiftly as may be
Afield they sped through the city, and eager way they made,

And all day long were they swaying the yoke about them laid.
And so the sun sank under and dark grew every road,
And therewith they came to Pheræ and Diocles' abode,
Of Orsilochus begotten, Alpheus' offspring dear.
And there nightlong they abided, and he gave them guesting-cheer.
But when the Mother of Morning, Rose-fingered Day-dawn, shone,
They yoked their steeds and their places in the painted chariot won,
And drave forth out of the forecourt, and the echoing pillared stead,
And smote the steeds to be going, and nothing loth they sped,
And soon to the burg of Pylos well-built the way was done.
Then Telemachus the heedful thus spake to Nestor's son:

"What thing, O Son of Nestor, wouldst thou promise and do for me
According unto mine asking? Since friends we boast us to be
From the kindness of our fathers, and we of one age withal,
And unto our better liking this our journey shall befal.
Now lead me not past my ship, but leave me here on the way,
Lest me unwilling the elder in his house and hall should stay
All eager to befriend me; and need is that I haste to begone."

So he spake, but rede and counsel of his mind took Nestor's son,
What wise he might promise and duly accomplish his behest;
And unto him so thinking this seemed to be the best.
To the swift ship and the sea-shore he turned the steeds away,
And the goodly gifts bore out in the ship's stern-part to lay,
E'en the gold and the raiment given by Menelaüs the King;
And then with speech he urged him and set these words on the wing:

"Now haste thee up a-shipboard, and bid all thy fellows as well
Before I get me homeward the tale to the elder to tell:
For well in my heart and my mind of the mood of my father I know

How masterful is he of spirit: he will not let thee go,
But himself will come hither to bid thee, and I deem indeed by my troth
That he will not go back empty, he shall be so exceeding wroth."

So he spake, and fell to driving the steeds of the fair-tressed mane
Back again to the burg of Pylos; and the house did they speedily gain;
But Telemachus egged on his fellows, and fell to bidding there:

"To the black ship, O my fellows, and order well the gear!
And go ye up a-shipboard that we our way may speed."

So spake he forth, and lightly they hearkened and gave heed,
And straight they went a-shipboard, and sat down on the thwarts alow.
But while he was toiling and praying, and unto Athene as now
Hard by the stern made offering, a certain man drew nigh,
An outland man, and from Argos for manslaying did he fly.
A seer, and by blood and getting of old Melampus' stock,
Who dwelt erewhile in Pylos, the mother of many a flock.
Now wealthy amid the Pylians a full rich house had he,
Till he went to another people, since his land he needs must flee,
And Neleus the mighty of mood, the proudest living on earth,
Who held for a full year's circle perforce his wealth and worth,
While he himself, Melampus, in bitter bonds and sore
In Phylacus' halls lay bounden, and stark were the griefs he bore
Because of Neleus' daughter, and the sin that on him weighed,
Which she, the fearful Goddess, the Wreaker, on him laid.
Yet he 'scaped his bane, and the oxen loud-lowing did he lead
From Phylace unto Pylos, and of the evil deed
On the godlike Neleus wreaked him; and then for his brother's hand
To the house he led a woman, and so went to another land,
To Argos, feeder of horses; for there was he doomed to abide,

And there should he lord it over the Argives far and wide.
There a high-roofed house he builded, and a wife he wedded then,
And Antiphates and Mantius begat, both mighty men.
But Antiphates after him gat Oïcles, mighty of mood,
And Oïcles Amphiaraüs the folk's upraiser good:
Beloved of Zeus the Shielded, beloved of Apollo he was
With manifold love; yet never the threshold of eld did he pass:
Because of the gifts of a woman in Thebes he had his bane,
But Amphilochus and Alcmæon were the sons that his getting did gain.
Then Mantius gat Polypheides and Cleitus; him on a day
Did the Gold-enthronèd Dawning wrap from the earth away
To dwell amid the Deathless because of his fairness' sake.
But the high-souled Polypheides a seer did Apollo make,
By far the best of menfolk since Amphiaraüs was dead;
Who departed, wroth with his father, to Hyperesia's stead,
And dwelling there, unto all men foretold what surely came.

Now his son was this new-comer, Theoclymenus by name,
Who anigh Telemachus standing where he found him midst his prayer
And pouring of drink-offerings, by the black ship swift to fare,
Sent wingèd words towards him, and bespake him face to face:

"O friend, since now I find thee with thine offerings in this place,
By the gifts and the God I beseech thee, and furthermore indeed
By thy very head and the shipmen that follow as ye lead,
Tell truth to me the seeker, nor the hidden story win:
What art thou, whence of menfolk, and thy city and thy kin?"

Then Telemachus the heedful to him made answer and said:
"Yea, plain to thee, O Stranger, shall all the tale be made;
Of Ithaca is my kindred, and I am Odysseus' son

If ever he were; for in these days he is evilly dead and gone;
Wherefore I took these fellows and the black ship that ye see
To seek some tidings of him so long aloof from me."

But the godlike Theoclymenus thus answered him again:
Like thee I am put from my country because a man I have slain;
A man of my folk; and a many do his brethren and his kin
In horse-rich Argos ruling mid the Achæans worship win;
And the death from them am I shunning, and their black doom do I flee,
Since now is my fate amid menfolk a wandering man to be.
So take me up a-shipboard, since I flee and make my prayer,
Lest they hew me down in slaughter; for yet following me they fare."

Then Telemachus the heedful thuswise he answered and said:
"I will not thrust thee craving from the ship the shapely-made;
Come on then, and of such things as we have shall we make thee cheer."

Thus spake he, and took from him his brazen-headed spear,
And laid it along on the deck of the swelling ship of the sea,
Then on to that sea-farer, and up aboard went he,
And sat him down in the stern, and there beside him close
This Theoclymenus set he; then men cast the hawsers loose.
Then Telemachus egged on his fellows, and a word upon them laid
To dight the tackling duly, and full yarely they obeyed.
They raised the mast of pine-tree, they stepped it well and fair
Within the mid-thwart's hollow, and with forestays stayed it there,
And with ox-hide ropes well-twisted hauled up the sails milk-white.
But Grey-eyed Athene sent them a wind that blew aright
Through the lift on-rushing fiercely, that as swiftly as might be
The fleeting ship might win her through the salt wave of the sea.
And by Crouni was she running, and the well-brooked Chalcis' shore;

But now the sun sank under, and all ways were darkened o'er;
And she made the land of Pheæ by the wind of Zeus sped on,
And way by the holy Elis, where Epeians rule, she won.
Thence on to the Tapering Islands his ship the youngling drave,
Still pondering should he be taken, or his soul from the death-day save.

Meanwhile in the booth Odysseus and the goodly swineherd sat
At supper, and beside them the other herdsmen ate;
But when the longing for meat and drink they had done away
Odysseus spake; for a trial on the swineherd would he lay,
Whether yet he would cherish him closely, and bid him abide in the place,
Or would egg him on to be wending and townward turn his face:

"Now hearken to me, Eumæus, and ye other fellows here,
Tomorn would I to the city that begging I may fare,
That thee and these thy fellows I may not quite undo;
Give me good rede, I prithee, and a good guide thereunto.
For townward must I wander, and thither need doth drive,
If perchance a cup and a morsel some man to me may give.
So to the house Odysseus the glorious may I come,
To Penelope the wiseheart to bear my message home;
And with those masterful Wooers would I mingle furthermore,
That a meal's meat they might give me from out their endless store.
And lightly as they willed me, for them would I play my part;
For this I tell thee, and hearken and lay it well to heart,
By the grace of Hermes the Flitter, who unto all doth give
The glory and worship of doing the works whereby they live,
No mortal man in serving like to me is deft and good,
In feeding of the fire, or in cleaving the dry wood,
Or in pouring the wine, or in carving, or dighting the roast and the broil—
The tasks wherein for the rich ones the poor are wont to toil."

Then thou spak'st, O swineherd Eumæus, whereas thine heart did grieve:
"O me, my guest, what a counsel thy mind doth now conceive!
For certes thou desirest to meet thy death in the town,
If unto the throng of the Wooers thou willest now go down,
Whose pride and high-hand outrage goeth up to the iron sky.
Forsooth none such as thou art they have to serve thereby;
But young men well apparelled in cloaks and kirtles fair,
And lovely are their faces and gleaming-soft their hair.
E'en such are they that serve them, and the polished tables shine,
For ever heavy-laden with bread and meat and wine.
Bide here; for of thy biding no man here grudgeth thee,
Neither I nor these my fellows, nor whoso here may be.
But when the dear son of Odysseus here cometh, he indeed
Shall give thee a cloak and a kirtle, a gift of goodly weed,
And shall flit thee whithersoever thy soul would have thee go."

Then the toil-stout goodly Odysseus made answer even so:
"Unto Father Zeus, Eumæus, may'st thou be e'en as lief
As thou art to me! since thou endest my wandering and fierce grief.
For nought is worse than wandering of every morta' ill.
But because of the baleful belly must men bear sorrow still,
And straying them befalleth, and pain and misery.
But since thou wouldst have me abide him, and biddest me here to be,
Of the mother of godlike Odysseus now somewhat do thou say,
And his father left on the threshold of eld when he went on his way,
If yet they abide with the living beneath the beams of the sun
Or unto the House of Hades have departed dead, undone?"

But him the swineherd answered, the leader of the men:
"Yea, the thing whereof thou seekest I will tell thee clearly then;
For as yet Laertes liveth, yet beseeching Zeus withal

That the soul may waste out of his body e'en there in his very hall;
So sore his child he lamenteth who far away doth abide,
And his kindly wiseheart helpmate, who indeed whenas she died
Drew eld untimely on him, and drew that sorrow on;
Since she died through the grief she suffered because of her glorious son.
A woeful death! may no one thus die of those that dwell
In the land and to me are kindly, and have done by me right well!
For so long as she was living, although sore sorrowing,
To ask and to seek about her to me was a happy thing.
For by her indeed was I fostered with her noble daughter fair,
E'en Ctimené the long-robed, the latest child she bare;
With her I say was I fostered, and had honour little less.
But when we both were gotten to our youth of happiness,
Her then they wedded in Samé, and great wedding-gifts they had.
But in raiment very goodly the Queen my body clad,
A cloak and a kirtle she gave me and shoes for my feet to wear,
And into the fields she sent me, and yet ever held me dear.
Of these things now am I lacking, yet the happy Gods indeed
Of the work wherein I hold me have given me good speed;
And withal have I meat and drink, and for hapless folk some cheer.
But as now of my mistress that is there is nothing happy to hear,
By word or by deed: since surely a plague on the house doth fall
Of masterful men. Yet greatly it rejoiceth the heart of a thrall
To speak in the face of the mistress, and to ask of everything,
And to eat and to drink, and thereafter have somewhat afield to bring
Of such things as the hearts of thrallfolk for evermore are fain."

But the many-wiled Odysseus he answered thus again:
"Woe worth, O swineherd Eumæus! how far hast thou wandered on,
From thy kindred and thy country when thou wert but a little one!
But come now, bespeak me of one thing, and clearly tell it all.

For, wasted by the warriors, did the wide-wayed city fall
Where thy father and mother beworshipped were dwelling a while agone?
Or thee, as thou wert abiding by the sheep and the oxen alone,
Did the foemen take to their ship, and carry thee away
Unto the house of that man, who for thee great price did pay?"

Spake the swineherd, the leader of men, and in this wise spake he:
"O guest, since of these matters thou askest and seekest of me,
Sit on and drink and be merry, and hush thy voice, and heed:
For measureless long is the night-tide, and time is for sleep indeed,
And time too for the merry hearkening; nor before the hour is come
Is need to wend us bedward; and much sleep is wearisome.
Of the others, whomso to sleep his heart and his soul shall sway,
Let him go his ways and slumber, but with dawning of the day
He shall break his fast, and follow the swine-droves of the king.
But here in the booth we twain at the drink and the banqueting
Shall be merry with the memory of each other's weary woe.
For very grief shall gladden the man that to and fro
Hath wandered wide in the world, and suffered sorrow sore.
So whereof thou askest and seekest, the tale shall I now tell o'er.

"There is an isle called Syria, if thereof thou hast heard and known,
Up over Ortygia is it, where turneth the sun to go down.
It is not right full of people, but a goodly land and sweet,
Well pastured, well be-herded, wine-plenteous, rich in wheat;
On that folk no famine falleth, and no sickness cometh anigh,
E'en such as oft so loathly smites hapless men that die.
But when eld amid that city creeps o'er the race of men
Cometh silver-bowed Apollo, and Artemis cometh then,
And they with their kindly arrows fall on and give the bane.

"Now therein are two cities and all things are shared atwain,
But over either people king was my father there,
E'en Ctesius, Ormenus' offspring, and the very godhead's peer.
Now thither came the Phœnicians, the ship-famed; hucksters these,
Who bore ten thousand trinkets in their black ship over the seas.
And withal a Phœnician woman dwelt in my father's house,
Tall, fair, and very cunning in work most glorious.
Her then the wily Phœnicians befooled upon a day:
For first as she was washing by the hollow ship, one lay
With her in love and dalliance, that oft and evermore
Befooleth minds of women, though deft they be of lore.
Next who she was he asked her, and whence of lands was come;
And straightway then she told him of her father's lofty home:
'I call myself of Sidon, abounding much in brass,
And I am the very daughter of the o'er-rich Arybas;
But Taphian men and sea-thieves they took me on a day
As I came from afield, and thither they flitted me away,
Unto the house of this man, and a noble price he paid.'

"Then he, the man who by stealth had lain beside her, said:
'And if thou wouldst follow us back and homeward, how would it be,
That the high-roofed house of thy father and mother thou may'st see?
Yea, they themselves; for as yet they live and are wealthy, 'tis said?'

"Then spake to him the woman and a word thereto she laid;
'Yea, this might be, if ye shipmen were willing now and here
To be sworn by an oath that scathless me homeward ye shall bear.'

"So she spake, and all they straightly took oath e'en as she bade.
But now when they had sworn them, and an end of the oath had made,
Then once more spake the woman, and thuswise answered she:

'Keep silence now; nor let any of you shipmen speak to me
Whenso ye happen upon me, if it be beside the well
Or out in the street, lest some one thereof to the old man tell
In the house, and he misdoubt him and take and bind me then
In bitter bonds, and devise him the death of all you men.
So the word in your hearts refrain you, and the sale of your wares push on.
But when the ship is laden with the stuff ye have trucked for and won,
Then unto the house let a message be quickly speeded home;
And such gold will I bring unto you as under my hand may come.
And yet more of a faring-penny were I fain to be giving withal.
A child there is of the goodman, that I tend in his house and hall,
Which same is a cunning youngling, that with me runs out and in;
And him would I bring to your ship, and huge price for him should ye win,
Whenso ye flit him to market amongst the alien men.'

"So saying she departed to the fair-built house as then;
But they abided by us for the wearing of a year,
And into their hollow ship their trucking drew much gear.
But when the hollow ship was burdened for the way,
Then they sent to the house one bearing a word to the woman to say.
So a man in craft exceeding came into my father's hall,
In his hand a golden collar with amber strung withal.
In the hall then the maids and my mother beworshipped were bidding a [price
For this thing and handling it over, and beholding it still with their eyes,
And meanwhile unto the woman a silent sign he sent
By wagging his head, and thereafter to the hollow ship he went.
So then by the hand she took me, and forth from the house she led;
And in the porch she happed on the cups and the tables spread,
Of the men who had been feasting, that my father did wait upon,
But unto the folk-assembly and the speech-stead forth had they gone.
So she caught up three cups and hid them away in her girdlestead,

And carried them off, and I followed, a simple fool, as she led.

"And so the sun sank under and all ways were darkened o'er,
And we hastened and came to the haven renownèd on the shore,
Where lay the swift seafarer of those Phœnician men.
And therewith we went a shipboard, o'er the wet ways sailed we then,
And Zeus for us was speeding a wind that blew aright;
So six days were we sailing alike by day and night.
But when Zeus, the Son of Cronos, had wrought the seventh day,
Then Artemis the shaft-fain did the woman smite and slay,
And she fell, and plunged down to the hold as diveth the mew of the sea;
And straight they cast her outboard, the meat and the prey to be
Of the sea-calves and the fishes, and left in my grief was I.
But the wind and water driving to Ithaca brought them anigh,
And there Laertes bought me with the wealth he had in hand,
And thus indeed mine eyen first looked upon the land."

But Odysseus, the Zeus-nourished, thus answering spake the word:
"Eumæus, very sorely this tale of thy telling hath stirred
The mood in my mind for thy sorrows, that oft thine heart hath had:
Yet Zeus for thee meseemeth hath set the good by the bad,
Whereas in thy toil thou hast gotten to the house of a man that is kind,
Who carefully for thy living both meat and drink doth find,
So that plentifully thou livest. While as for me—Yea, then,
Hither I come wide-wandering through the many cities of men."

Thus then they told to each other, and no long while did abide
In sleep and slumber lying, but e'en for the littlest tide,
For at hand was the Gold-throned Day-dawn.

But on the shore at las
Telemachus' shipmen briskly struck sail and unshipped mast,

And then with rowing speeded the ship to the beaching-ground,
And cast the anchors outboard, and fast the hawsers bound.
Then outboard on the seashore themselves withal they wend,
And therewith their meat are dighting and the dark-red wine they blend.

But when the desire for meat and for drink they had done away,
Then Telemachus the heedful thus fell to speak and say:
"Do ye now drive on straightly the black ship toward the town,
While I unto the acres and fields will get me down,
But to-night will go up to the city when my lands I have looked upon,
And to-morrow will set before you the faring-wage ye have won,
To wit, a noble banquet of flesh and sweetest wine."

But therewith spake unto him Theoclymenus divine:
"Dear child, and whither wend I? To what man's house of the men,
Who in Ithaca the craggy are lords, shall I get me then?
Shall I go straight unto thy mother, and the very house of thy stead?"

But Telemachus the heedful to him thus answered and said:
"Yea, otherwise would I bid thee unto my house to speed,
For none there faileth of guest-cheer; but for thee 'twill be worser indeed,
For I shall lack; and neither will my mother see thee at all,
For not oft before the Wooers is she seen amidst the hall,
But aloof in the upper chamber her weaving doth she speed.
But I of a man will tell thee to whom thou may'st come at need,
E'en Eurymachus the glorious, the wiseheart Polybus' son,
Whom e'en as the peer of Godhead do the Ithacans look upon;
For he is their best and greatest, and longeth eagerly
For the wedding of my mother and Odysseus' sov'reignty:
But Zeus of Olympus knoweth who dwells in the lofty home,
If yet before the wedding their evil day may come."

As he spake, from the right came flying a fowl, a falcon fleet,
Swift flitter of Apollo, who held betwixt his feet
A dove, and with talons tore her, and to earth the feathers poured,
Midway 'twixt where the ship was and Telemachus the lord.
Him then did Theoclymenus aloof from his fellows call,
And clasped his hand and bespake him, and said the word withal:

"Telemachus, nowise godless flew the fowl forth on the right;
Yea, I knew him for a token so soon as he came in sight.
Among the Ithacan people there is none so kingly a race
As thine is: ye are the stronger, and for ever first in place."

But Telemachus the heedful he answered him again:
"And were thy word accomplished, then O but I were fain!
Then shouldst thou know of my kindness and the gifts that I should give,
That whosoever met thee should call thee blest to live."

Therewith unto Piræus his trusty friend did he call:
"Piræus, son of Clytius, of my fellow-farers all
That followed me to Pylos thou hearkenest most to me;
So do thou take this stranger, and have him home with thee,
To cherish in all honour till back again I fare."

Then answered him Piræus, the famous with the spear:
"Telemachus, e'en if thou bidest longwhile ere thou come back,
I will cherish the man, and nowise of guest-cheer shall he lack."

So saying he went a-shipboard, and to all those gave the word
To cast aloose the hawsers and themselves to come aboard;
And aboard went all men lightly, and a-down on the benches they sat.
But underneath his footsoles fair sandals Telemachus gat,

And from off the deck of the ship he took a mighty spear,
Headed with brass, sharp-whetted. Then they cast the hawsers clear,
And thrust out, and made for the city according to the word
Of Telemachus, son belovèd of Odysseus the good lord.

But for him, his feet sped onward till he came to the garth and the wall,
Where dwelt his swine unnumbered, and where slept his swineherd withal,
The goodman knowing the kindness that unto his lords should fall.

BOOK XVI.

ARGUMENT.

TELEMACHUS COMETH TO THE BOOTH OF THE SWINEHERD, AND SENDETH HIM TO THE TOWN WITH TIDINGS TO PENELOPE. ODYSSEUS MAKETH HIMSELF KNOWN TO HIS SON. THE CREW OF TELEMACHUS BRING THE SHIP TO HAVEN BY THE TOWN; AND IN LIKEWISE THOSE WHO WAYLAID HIM COME BACK HOME. THE WOOERS TAKE COUNSEL CONCERNING TELEMACHUS' SAFE RETURN, AND PENELOPE UPBRAIDETH THEM FOR THEIR ILL-DOINGS. EUMÆUS COMETH BACK TO TELEMACHUS AT THE BOOTH, AND TELLETH OF THE SPEEDING OF HIS MESSAGE.

AS it fell, in the booth Odysseus, and the swineherd, the goodly of men,
Were dighting their breakfast at dawning, and kindling the fire as [then,
And with the swine wold-pasturing had sent the herds away;
But round Telemachus fawned they, the ban-dogs wont to bay,
Nor howled as he came forward; and Odysseus noted that,
Both the fawning dogs, and the trampling of coming feet thereat,
So straight unto Eumæus a wingèd word he said:

"Eumæus, one of thy fellows now cometh unto the stead,
Or some one else that thou knowest; for the dogs howl at him nought,
But are whining round about him; and the sound of feet have I caught."
[10

But scarce the word had he spoken ere lo in the door of the close
Stood his own son well-belovèd; and amazed Eumæus arose,
And down from his hands fell the vessels wherewith he was labouring
In blending the dark-red wine, and he went up unto the king,

And on the head he kissed him, and both his eyes so fair,
And both his hands moreover, and he shed a mighty tear;
And e'en as a loving father makes much of his dear son,
Who hath come from an alien country when the tenth long year is done
His only son and darling for whom he hath travailed sore,
E'en so the goodly swineherd now kisseth him o'er and o'er,
Telemachus the godlike, as one escaped from death,
And amidst of moans and greeting such wingèd words he saith:

[said

"Thou art come, sweet light of mine eyes, Telemachus! Yea, though I
I should see thee no more, when to Pylos in the fleeting ship ye sped.
Come in, dear child, I bid thee, that mine heart may be glad of thy face,
When at last I look upon thee new come from an alien place.
For not oft hast thou come to thine herdsmen, or the countryside hast seen,
But a city-abider art thou, and thy will hereto hath it been
To behold the throng of the Wooers, the ravening company."

Then Telemachus the heedful in this wise answered he:
"Yea, even so, my father! and for this cause am I come,
To set mine eyes upon thee and to hearken thy word of my home.
If yet in our halls my mother abideth, or is wed
To another man at this moment; the while Odysseus' bed
Lies lacking gear to sleep in, and cobwebs foul doth breed."

Then answered him the swineherd that folk afield did lead:
"Yea, surely she abideth, and a steadfast heart she bears
Within the halls of thine homestead, but in grief the night-tide wears
All nights that are, and weepeth through all the days that pass."

So saying from the youngling he took his spear of brass,
Who over the stony threshold now stepped with entering feet;

And unto him would his father Odysseus yield his seat,
But Telemachus withheld him on his part, and thus he said:

"Nay, sit thee down, O stranger! for sure in this our stead
Another seat shall we get us; and the man is at hand therefor."

So he spake, and back went Odysseus, and sat him down as afore;
But green twigs was the swineherd strewing, and fleeces thereupon,
And on the same thereafter sat Odysseus' lovèd son.
Then platters of roasted flesh-meat did the swineherd by them lay,
Which was of the meat left over from the feast of yesterday,
And bread in the maunds of wicker he hasted to heap up,
And the wine heart-soothing he mingled within the ivy cup,
And sat down over against him, Odysseus wondrous of might.

So they reached out their hands to the victual that lay before them dight.
And when of meat and of drink they had done the longing away,
Then to the goodly swineherd 'gan Telemachus to say:
"Father, and whence is the stranger, and whatwise over the sea
Did the shipmen to Ithaca bring him, and what did they boast them to be?
For hitherward meseemeth afoot he might not fare."

Then thou, O swineherd Eumæus, didst answer then and there:
"Yea, son, and to thee full surely a true tale will I tell:
For he saith of the folk he cometh in Crete the wide that dwell,
And that he hath been cast in his strayings to men's cities full many an one.
Since e'en such is the thread of the doom that the Gods for him have spun.
But as now from a ship of Thesprotians hath he fled away aland,
And come to this mine homestead: so I give him into thine hand,
And do thou to him as thou willest: but he boasts him thy bedesman to be."

But Telemachus the heedful in this wise answered he:
"Eumæus, this word spoken is a grievous word of thine;
For how may I take this stranger to the house and the hall that is mine?
For myself, I am but a youngling; nor trust in my hands have I
To ward me from him who against me would stir up enmity;
And my mother, the mood within her hangs doubtfully indeed,
Whether she with me abiding the house and home shall heed,
And honour the bed of my father, and the fame of the folk and its word;
Or shall follow him of Achæans whom she deemeth the worthiest lord
That in her halls is wooing, and gives gifts most plenteous.
But now for this same stranger, since he hath come to thine house,
I shall give him a cloak and a kirtle that be raiment fair and meet,
And a two-edged sword moreover, and sandals to his feet,
And will speed him whithersoever his soul will have him fare.
Or keep him if thou willest in the stead and make him cheer;
And the raiment will I send him, and meat withal from the town,
That thee and these thy fellows, he may not wear thee down.
But I will not have him wending where the Wooers' band abide,
For with folly of heart do they fare, and most unmeasured pride,
Lest they fall to and maltreat him, and so bring me sorrow sore;
Since hard it is to be dealing, one man with many and more,
In despite of all his valiance; for the stronger side have they."

Then unto him did the goodly toil-stout Odysseus say:
"O friend, since for me it is lawful to answer yet a word,
My heart hast thou cleft asunder with this tale that I have heard;
Whereas ye say that the Wooers such prideful folly plan
Within thine halls despite thee, and thou such a worshipful man!
But say! art thou cowed of thy freewill, or the people everywhere,
Do they hate thee through the city because God's voice they hear?
Or castest thou blame on thy brethren; on whose help in the warfaring

A man may well be trusting for as great as the strife may upspring?
Ah, were I yet in my youth-days, and of such an heart indeed,
Or were I the son of Odysseus, or himself come back at need
From all his many wanderings; since the hope is yet alive;
Yea then might the stroke of another the head from my body drive,
But I went to the house of Odysseus, and into Laertes' hall,
And made myself the banesman of those Wooers one and all!
Yea, and even if, one amid many, I there were overcome,
Yet so to fall were better, and to die in the halls of my home,
Than such foul deeds for ever to look on with mine eyes.
The very guests mishandled, and in unseemly wise
The women-thralls haled roughly about the lovely stead;
The wine-casks ever running, and wantons eating bread
In waste—and all for nothing; for a deed that shall not be."

Then Telemachus the heedful in this wise answered he:
"Yea the tale hereof, O stranger, to thee will I clearly show;
For the whole folk nowise hates me nor counteth me its foe;
Nor cast I blame on my brethren, on whose help in the warfaring
A man may well be trusting, for as great as the strife may upspring.
For look you, the Son of Cronos gives our race but a single son.
Arcesius begat Laertes, and had but him alone,
And his father begat Odysseus, one only son, and he
Left me in his halls one only—and had no joy of me.
And therefore in mine homestead is the foes' folk manifold:
Yea all the best of the islands, who rule thereover hold,
As Dulichium, or Samé, or Zacynthus' woody lands,
Or in Ithaca the craggy have folk beneath their hands,
All these are wooing my mother, and eating mine house away:
And she the loathsome wedding doth not utterly gainsay,
Nor may make an ending of it, while they eat up house and all,

And no long time shall pass over ere on me shall their havoc fall.
But on God's knees it lieth, all this that is and shall be.
Now hasten, thou, O father, to the wise Penelope,
And say that back am I gotten from Pylos safe and well:
But here will I bide; and the tidings to her alone shalt thou tell,
And come thy ways back hither, lest thereof some man should know.
For my bane are a many devising, and manifold is the foe."

But his word, O swineherd Eumæus, thuswise didst thou answer it:
"I wot and I heed; for thou biddest a man not lacking for wit.
But I prithee tell me of one thing, and speak out straight and clear;
To that unhappy Laertes shall I go by the way to bear
These tidings? for up to this while, for Odysseus grieving withal,
He would oversee his acres, and eat and drink in his hall
With his house-carles, whenso desire should move his mind thereto.
But from the time when to Pylos thou needs must ship and go,
Men say that thus it fareth, that he eateth and drinketh no more,
Nor hath an eye to his acres, but sitteth in sorrow sore,
In weeping and in wailing, and the flesh from his bones doth wane."

But Telemachus the heedful thus answered him again:
"Woe worth! but though it be grievous, alone must we leave him still.
For if all things by mortals might be chosen after their will,
Then would I choose my father and his returning day.
So get back after thy message, nor through the tillage stray
Seeking the man: but natheless thou may'st tell my mother to speed
Her housewife with all swiftness, yet privily indeed,
That she the tale may be telling to the elder of the land."

He spake, and uproused the swineherd, who took his shoes in his hand
And unto his feet he bound them and took the townward road.

But Athene failed not to note him as he went from that abode,
And drew near, like to a woman both tall and fair to see,
And deft in goodly working of the weaver's mystery.
So manifest unto Odysseus she stood 'gainst the door of the place,
But Telemachus saw her nowise though she stood before his face;
For not unto all are the Gods clear-seen in the light of the day.
But the dogs and Odysseus beheld her, yet her they did not bay,
But toward the far side of the booth they shrank away with a whine.

Then she bent her brows and nodded, and Odysseus noted the sign,
And forth he went from the chamber to the garth's high-builded wall,
And there he stood before her, and to him she spake withal:

"O Zeus-bred son of Laertes, Odysseus of many a rede,
Now speak out the word to thy son, nor hide thou the day and the deed,
That death and doom for the Wooers ye two at last may frame,
When ye come your ways to the city and the dwelling great of fame.
Nor long shall I be lacking; for I weary for the fight."

At the word with her rod all golden Odysseus did she smite,
And a kirtle and cloak well-washen she did about his breast,
And fulfilled the might of his body, and his manhood at the best;
And his cheeks filled out, and the colour grew deep o'er all his skin,
And deep the beard was waxing and dark about his chin.

So she wrought, and her ways she wended, and aback to the booth went he,
And sore his dear son marvelled, and feared that sight to see,
And in dread his eyes drew from him lest a very God it were;
Yet his voice withal he uttered and winged a word to hear:

"O guest, now art thou another than thou wert before mine eyes,

And other raiment hast thou, and thy skin wrought otherwise,
Yea, thou art a God of the God-folk who the wide-spread heavens do hold.
Be kind, that we may give thee well-fashioned gifts of gold
With the holy rites thou lovest: and spare us now we pray!"

But the toil-stout goodly Odysseus in this wise fell to say:
"I am no God; why then a God of me wilt thou make?
And yet am I thy father, whom for thy sorrow's sake
So often thou bewailedst, borne down by the wrong of man."

So he spake, and his son he kissed, and to earth the tear-drops ran
From his cheeks, though up to this while he refrained them steadfastly:
But Telemachus, for in nowise he trowed him his father to be,
Again with words made answer, and thuswise fell to say:

"Thou art not my father Odysseus; rather some God today
Befooleth me, that the worser may be my weeping and woe.
For this thing a man that dieth could nowise fashion so,
Or in his mind contrive it; unless some God forsooth
Encompass him, and give him by his will or eld or youth.
For an old man clad but foully thou satest here beside,
Who now to the Gods art likest that hold the heavens the wide."

But Odysseus of many a rede he answered thus and said:
"Telemachus, for that thou seest thy father here in the stead
Not overmuch shouldst thou wonder, or stand in all amaze.
For never another Odysseus shall come unto his place;
But such as I am, toil-worn, wide-wandering, hither I come
In the twentieth year of my travail to my fatherland and my home.
But all this is the work of Athene, the Driver of the Prey,
Who maketh me e'en as she willeth, for of might she is, and she may,

One while like a very beggar, and another while indeed
Like a fresh young man, whose body is clad in lovely weed;
For unto the Gods 'tis easy, who hold the heavens the wide,
To exalt a man of mortals, or abase him on a tide."

So he spake and adown he sat him, and Telemachus withal
Clung round his valiant father, and let the tear-drops fall;
And so sorely for the weeping did the soul of either yearn
That each fell a-wailing shrilly; and as ceaseless as the erne,
Or the crook-clawed gar-fowl crieth, when the country-folk by sleight
Have carried off their fledgelings ere they be fit for flight,
So piteously the tear-rain down from their brows did pour:
And forsooth the sun had sunken upon their weeping sore
If Telemachus had not spoken to his father presently:

"In what ship, belovèd father, did the shipmen o'er the sea [come?
Unto Ithaca bring thee? Who were they, and whence did they say they were
Since afoot and aland meseemeth thou cam'st not hither home?"

But the toil-stout valiant Odysseus made answer thereunto:
"Forsooth, my child, the story will I tell thee straight and true:
'Twas the ship-renowned Phæacians who brought me here to hand,
Who ever ferry all men who come unto their land.
And they brought me amidst of my slumber in a swift ship over the sea,
And in Ithaca set me adown, and great gifts they gave unto me,
Both of gold and of brass abundance, and of goodly woven weed,
Which lie in the hollow rock-dens by the Godfolk's grace and speed;
And hither I come thrust onward by the lore that Athene knows
That we may now take counsel, and compass the bane of our foes.
Now therefore number the Wooers, and tell out their tale to me,
That I may behold how many and what manner of men they be;

WOOLWICH PUBLIC LIBRARIES

And then in my mind unblemished I will ponder the deed to be done,
And consider if we be able to prevail against them alone,
We twain without another; or if we must seek us aid."

But Telemachus the heedful thereto made answer and said:
"I have heard of thy fame, O father, and the glory of thy deeds,
Of thine hands a mighty warrior, and wise of wit and redes;
But huge is thy word, and amazement hath seized me. Nay, but nought
May many men and valiant by two alone be fought.
For not ten alone are the Wooers; nor are they but twice ten,
But a many more: thou shalt know it, the number of those men.
There cometh up out of Dulichium a band of fifty and two,
Of chosen swains, and with them six house-carles ever go;
And next of the men of Samé are twenty youths and four;
And there cometh from Zacynthus of Achæans another score;
And twelve are from Ithaca hereby, and they forsooth of the best:
And with them is the herald Medon, and the godlike singer blest;
And therewith two swains of service full deft the victual to dight.
And if within thine homestead all these we meet in fight
Thy coming to wreak thee of wrong for us shall be bitter bane.
Say then if thou mayest bethink thee of a helper good for our gain,
E'en one who with heart and with soul will bear us warding and aid."

Therewith the valiant Odysseus, the toil-stout, answered and said:
"Yea, of such an one will I tell thee, and hearken thou, and heed,
If Athene with Zeus the Father be anywise good for our need,
Or whether I yet shall bethink me of another warder of bane."

Then Telemachus the heedful he spake, and answered again:
"Yea, these are valiant helpers of whom thou tellest the tale,
And aloft in the clouds are they sitting, and their might is of all avail,

Both over all men of menfolk and the Gods that never die."

Then the toil-stout goodly Odysseus he answered presently:
"Not long shall these be lacking from the mighty battle-din
When we and the band of the Wooers shall meet my halls within,
And the play of the might of Ares shall be tried between us there.
But do thou thyself wend homeward when the daydawn shineth clear,
And there do thou mix and mingle with the Wooers overproud;
And me to the town thereafter shall the swineherd bring on the road,
Most like to a beggar, wretched and aged by many a year;
But if me in the house they mishandle, yet in thine heart forbear,
And refrain the soul within thee, whatso of ill I meet.
Yea, if e'en through the house and outdoors they hale me by the feet,
Or cast at me to smite me; yet forbear as thou lookest on these,
And with smooth words rather bid them that they from their folly cease.
Yet not for all thy speaking shall they hearken thee or heed,
Since on their heads full swiftly their day of doom doth speed.
Yet another word; and do thou to thine heart's root lay the thing:
When Athene rich in counsel the thought to my mind shall bring
I shall nod with my head, and straightway, when thou hast heeded me,
Whatsoever gear of Ares within the hall may be,
Take all, and lay it together in the nook of the chamber aloft,
And then unto those the Wooers give gentle words and soft,
When at last they come to miss them, and thereof they ask thee close:
'From out of the smoke have I laid them; for now nought are they like
Which erst, to Troy-town faring, Odysseus left behind, [unto those
But are marred where the reek of the fire the face of them might find.
And another matter and greater hath Zeus set in my mind withal,
That ye, when ye are drunken to strife and wounds may fall
And befoul the feast and the wooing; for this is said aright,
That e'en of himself the iron draws on a man to smite.'

But two swords and two spears for us twain alone shalt thou leave in the hall,
And two oxhide shields moreover for our hands to wield withal,
That we may rush on and take them, and Pallas Athene then,
And Zeus the allwise of counsel, to their doom shall draw those men.
And another thing yet will I tell thee, and anigh to thine heart let it be:
If thou art verily mine, and come of the blood of me,
Then let not any one hear it that Odysseus is within:
Let not Laertes know it, or the swineherd word of it win,
Nor any one of the house-thralls, nor e'en Penelope;
For the mind of the women, we only shall know what it may be;
And some indeed of the men-thralls we yet may try apart,
Which one of them giveth us worship and honoureth us in his heart,
And which heeds thee nought and mocks thee; yea, and thou e'en such [an one!"

Then spake again and answered Odysseus' glorious son:
"Father, methinks hereafter thou shalt come to know my mind,
And no light headlong folly there holding me shalt find;
But unto us meseemeth this thing shall scarce be good,
And I bid thee turn it over in thy mind and in thy mood.
Long while shalt thou weary for little in trying each of these,
Through the country-side a-wandering, while in thine hall at ease
Those men thy goods devour, and spare them not a whit.
Indeed, for the ways of the women, I would have thee look to it
Which do thine house dishonour, and which be guiltless still.
But from stead to stead I would not be wending by my will
To try the men; though hereafter with this may we deal also,
If a sign of Zeus the Shielded thou verily dost know."

So unto one another such matters did they say;
But meanwhile to the Ithacan haven was the good ship come her way
Which had ferried Telemachus over from Pylos with his men,

But when to the deep of the haven they were gotten, there and then
They shoved the swift black ship all high and dry on the shore,
And the high-heart swains of service aland their weapons bore;
But to Clytius' house they carried the gifts full glorious,
And therewith sent on a henchman unto Odysseus' house,
To Penelope the wiseheart, to tell out all the tale,
How Telemachus had landed in the field and had bidden them sail
The ship unto the city; lest, soul possessed by dread,
The goodly queen in sorrow soft flowing tears should shed.

So the henchman and the swineherd they met upon the way,
The twain on one errand wending, the tale to a woman to say;
But when at last they were gotten to the house of the holy king,
The henchman amidst of the handmaids his message straight did bring:

"O Queen, thy son belovèd is now come home to thee."

And therewithal the swineherd stood anigh Penelope,
And told her all the tidings as her son belovèd bade;
And so when he had spoken, and an end of his errand had made,
He turned him aback to his swine, and left the garths and the hall.

But sore troubled were the Wooers, and downcast of heart withal,
And out of the house they wended by the garth-wall high and great,
And thereby adown they sat them and over against the gate,
And amidst them fell to speaking Eurymachus Polybus' son.

"O friends, a deed that is mighty full boldly hath been done;
—Telemachus and his wayfare; and we said it should not be.
So come! a black ship of the goodliest, let us shove adown to the sea,
And gather sea-wont oarsmen, that their swiftest they may wend.

With the message unto our fellows to come home and make an end."

But lo, ere his word was over, the ship Amphinomus saw,
As in his place he turned him, to the deep of the haven draw,
And the folk her sails a-furling and the oars a-handling there;
So laughing very sweetly he spake to his fellows fair:

"Now ye shall not speed the message; for lo they are coming in:
Either some God hath told them, or they a sight did win
Of his ship a-slipping by them, and no meeting might there be."

So he spake; and they rose up and wended adown to the shore of the sea,
And the black ship straight did they beach all high and dry on the shore,
And the high-souled swains of service aland their armour bore,
And they unto the high-place went thronging, and none there
Would they have beside them sitting, whether old or young he were.
But Antinoüs son of Eupeithes amidst them speech began:

"Out on it! how have the godfolk from his evils freed this man!
Daylong on the windy nesses sat the watchers, ever one
Still following on the other; and at setting of the sun
On the land we never rested a night, but sailed the sea,
In our swift ship ever abiding, till the Holy Dawn should be,
Telemachus waylaying, till him we might take and slay:
But some God in meantime took him and led him home away.
But for him a woeful ending henceforth let us compass and speed,
Nor yet let the man escape us; because I deem of our deed
That while this man is living we shall not accomplish it,
Since forsooth he hath understanding of counsel and of wit;
And the people, they no longer be kind to us and sweet.
Come then, before this youngling shall call on the folk to meet

In the high-place! for I deem not that he shall let it fall,
But will presently rise up in wrath, and tell out his tale before all,
How his utter bane we plotted, though we happed not on his ways;
And when our ill deed they have hearkened, see ye if they deal us praise!
Or rather do us a mischief, and drive us away from our home
And our lands, and unto the people of an alien folk shall we come.
So let us forego him and slay him in the field aloof from the town,
Or on the way: and his chattels and goods shall be our own,
Dealt out by lot amongst us; the while the house and stead
We shall give unto his mother to hold with the man she shall wed.
But if this word nothing like you, and it rather be your will
That he yet shall live and be holding the wealth of his father still,
Then no longer here assembled let us eat as hitherto
His happy wealth, but each man from his own hall let him woo,
And press on with the gifts of wooing; and thereafter let her wed
The man that most gifts giveth and thereto by fate is led."

So he spake; but all they in silence that word of his did take,
Till Amphinomus amidst them took up the word and spake,
The noble son of Nisus, Aretias' son the King,
Who from the isle Dulichium, wheat-rich, grass-flourishing,
Led on the Wooers, and ever most pleased Penelope
With happy words; for gifted of goodly redes was he;
He then, no goodwill lacking, spake there, and fell to say:

"Friends, nowise am I willing Telemachus to slay,
For this is a thing most fearful in a kingly house to kill:
So first let us seek to the Gods, and ask of their counsel and will;
And if indeed it pleaseth the doom of Zeus in his might,
Then forsooth will I hearten you others; yea, and I myself will smite;
But if the Gods turn from it, then you I bid refrain!"

So Amphinomus spake, and the others of the word he spake were fain
And they rose and unto the house of Odysseus did they fare,
And entering, sat them adown on the polished high-seats there.

But Penelope the wise-heart she thought another thought,
To show herself to the Wooers mid their pride unstayed by nought:
For she knew of her own child's slaying that was to be in the stead,
For Medon the henchman had told her, who had heard their counsel said.
And so with her women beside her to the feast-hall did she fare.

Then came that glory of Women amidst the feast-hall there,
And stood up by the door-post of the fair-built high-roofed hall,
And the gleaming coif was she holding before her cheeks withal.
So Antinoüs she chided and spake and named his name:

"Antinoüs, forger of bale, pride-holden, of thee is the fame
That amidst of the Ithacan people thy peers dost thou out-go
In speech-words and in counsel; but nowise is it so.
Fool! why art thou patching up bale and bane for Telemachus then?
And the suppliants nought thou heedest, of whom Zeus bears witness to
And to patch up ill for each other is a thing to men accurst. [men.
Yea, knowest thou not that thy father fled hither a suppliant erst
In fear of the folk? since forsooth exceeding wroth they were,
Because with the Taphian sea-thieves the bale of war he bare
Against the folk Thesprotian, with whom as friends we live;
So his slaughter they desired and his heart to rend and rive,
And withal his goods to devour, a rich enduring store;
But as then Odysseus refrained them, for all that they longed for it sore.
And now his house thou eatest in shame, and wooest his wife,
And slayest his son, and bringest great bale upon my life.
Withhold thine hand, I charge thee, and these other men refrain!"

Then Eurymachus Polybus' son to her made answer again:
"O Daughter of Icarius, all-wise Penelope,
Hold up thine heart, and these things, let them not trouble thee!
For the man is not, nor shall be, nor yet may be born in the land,
Who on thy son Telemachus shall ever lay a hand,
At least while I am living and on earth beholding the sun;
And this straight out I tell thee, and verily shall it be done,
That his black blood soon should be running adown my battle-spear,
For the city-waster Odysseus full oft in the days that were
On his knees would set me, and give me into these hands of mine
The roasted flesh, and hold to me the cup of the dark-red wine.
Therefore to me of all men is Telemachus most dear,
And nowise do I bid him of his death to have a fear;
At least from these the Wooers; but God's doom is nought to shun."

Thuswise her heart was he cheering while he plotted death for her son.

But her ways therewith she wended to her gleaming bower aloft,
And her lord beloved, Odysseus, she wept, till slumber soft
And sweet upon her eyelids Grey-eyed Athene shed.

But a-night unto Odysseus and his son the swineherd sped,
And came thither; and their supper were they deftly dighting there,
Having slain a yearling porker: but Athene drew anear
And stood beside Odysseus, Laertes' very son,
And with her staff did she smite him and his eld withal did on,
And foul raiment she did on his body, lest his face the swineherd should see,
And should know him for what he was, and unto Penelope
Should hasten to bring the tidings, nor hold it hid in his heart.

But Telemachus unto him first spake a word for his part:

"Thou art come, O good Eumæus; what news in the town is told?
Are they yet come in from the ambush, the Wooers over-bold?
Or lie they yet a lurking my goings to waylay?"

Then thou, O swineherd Eumæus, thuswise didst answer and say:
"No matter of mine I deemed it of such things to seek and ask
As I went up toward the city, for my mind had set me the task
In haste to give my message and my way back hither to get:
But thy fellows' swift-foot herald, a speeder of errands, I met,
Who the word unto thy mother before me there did bring.
And another matter I wot of; for mine eyes beheld the thing.
I saw as I was a-wending whereas above the town
The ridge Hermæan lieth, a swift ship coming down
Our haven; and a many the men aboard her were,
And of bucklers was her burden, and good store of the two-tyned spear.
And that will be they, I bethought me.—Yet nought I know at all."

So he spake; and the holy might of Telemachus smiled withal,
And he cast his eyes on his father; but the swineherd's eyes did he shun.

So their meat they dighted, and feasted now all their toil was done,
And nought their souls were lacking of the equal feast and fain;
But when the longing for meat and for drink at last they have slain
Then they of the bed bethink them, and the gift of sleep they gain.

BOOK XVII.

ARGUMENT.

TELEMACHUS GOETH TO THE TOWN AND TELLETH OF HIMSELF TO HIS MOTHER. EUMÆUS BRINGETH ODYSSEUS TO HIS OWN HOUSE, WHICH HE ENTERETH ALONE IN THE LIKENESS OF A BEGGAR; HE BEGGETH BROKEN VICTUAL THEREIN, AND IS EVILLY ENTREATED BY ANTINOÜS.

BUT when the Mother of Morning, Rose-fingered Day-dawn, shone,
Then Telemachus, belovèd, godlike Odysseus' son,
His sandals fairly fashioned bound underneath his feet,
And he took a mighty war-spear for his own hand shapen meet,
As townward he turned, and, going to the swineherd, thus spake he:

"Father, I go to the city that my mother may look on me;
For I deem that ere she behold me she will cease not to lament,
No stay her woeful wailing with tearful weeping blent.
But, for this guest unhappy, a charge on thee I lay,
That thou lead him adown to the city that he may beg and pray,
And earn him a meal; and whoso hath will shall give him there
The morsel of bread and the cup; but for me I may not bear
All manner of men to uphold them, for sore trouble weigheth on me;
And if wroth thereat be the stranger, then more grievous to him shall it be;
But verily on my part of speaking the truth am I fain."

But Odysseus of many a rede he spake and answered again:
"O friend, and I myself to be stayed here nowise yearn;

For handier 'tis for a beggar his meat by begging to earn
In the town than afield; and whoso hath will thereto, let him give!
I am nought of an age meseemeth by field and fold to live
In all wise heeding a master, who biddeth me to and fro:
Go then, and this man shall lead me as thou biddest him to do
When I am warmed by the fire, and hot is waxen the sun,
For exceeding ill is my raiment, and I fear lest I be undone
By the morning rime; and the town is afar off as ye say."

So he spake; and Telemachus thereon from the homestead went on his way,
With brisk feet hastening onward as ill for the Wooers he sowed;
But when he was come to the houses of that well-builded abode,
'Gainst a tall-shafted pillar he leaned his battle-spear,
And he himself strode over the stony threshold there.
But the nurse, e'en Euryclea, beheld him first of all
As the fleecy fells she was spreading o'er the painted seats of the hall,
And weeping went straight toward him; and the other maids thereto
Of Odysseus hardy-hearted all round about him drew,
And they kissed him and caressed him, his shoulders and his head.

Then Penelope the wise-heart from her chamber forth she sped,
Like to golden Aphrodite or Artemis the fair,
And she cast her arms amidst weeping round her son beloved and dear;
And therewithal she kissed him, his head and his lovely eyes,
And ever she moaned about him as she spake the word that flies:

"Thou art come, sweet light of mine eyen! and I, I said of thee,
That I never again should behold thee when thou sailedst privily
In my despite unto Pylos, of thy lovèd father to hear.
Come, tell me what was the sight that thou haddest of him there."

But Telemachus the heedful made answer for his part:
"Wake not my grief, O mother, and harry not my heart
Within my breast, who but hardly from the bitter bane have won.
But wash thy body with water, and fresh raiment do thereon,
And unto thine upper chamber with these thy women go,
For the gifts an hundred-folded, full told, the vows to do
To all Gods; that Zeus may grant it that the wreaking-day may come.
But I will go forth to the High-Place to bid a stranger home,
Who as I journeyed hither came with me over-sea;
But him did I send forward with my godlike company,
Giving charge unto Piræus with him to his house to go,
And cherish him in honour till I might come thereto."

So he spake, and with her abided wingless the word he said,
And she washed her body with water, and thereon fresh raiment laid;
And to all the Gods she promised gifts an hundredfold to do,
Full tale, if the day of wreaking Zeus yet would bring thereto.
But Telemachus turned him, and thence from the hall of the stead strode [out,
With his spear in his hand, and followed by two hounds full fleet of foot;
And Athene shed upon him a holy, wondrous grace,
So that all the people marvelled that he happed on in the place.
But thereabout were gathered those Wooers high of fame, [they frame;
With good words in their mouths; but evil in the deep of their hearts did
So from their crowd he drew him, and the great entanglement,
And where Mentor and Antiphus sat, and Halitherses, he went,
Since his father's friends had they been from old time and the early days:
So he sat him adown by these men, and they asked him of all his ways.

But to them drew near Piræus, spear-famous lord, who led
His guest throughout the city unto the meeting-stead;

Nor long aloof from his guest was Telemachus, but drew near;
Unto whom thus spake Piræus a word for him to hear:

"Telemachus, bid the women unto my house to wend,
That the gifts of Menelaüs to thee I straight may send."

But Telemachus the heedful he answered him and spake:
"Piræus, nay: for we know not what turn the thing may take,
If the haughty Wooers should slay me by stealth within my hall,
And should deal out the goods of my father, and my chattels one and all.
Then better that thou have them, and use them, than one of these.
But if of the seed of their deathday and their doom I may reap the increase,
Then to me, made glad in my house, shalt thou bring them glad on a day."

So saying he led to the homestead the stranger worn by the way;
But when to the place well builded and into the hall they win,
They cast their cloaks on the benches and the high-seats therewithin,
And wend to the well-smoothed bath-vats, and wash their bodies there.
But when the maids had washed them, and with oil had sleeked them fair,
Good cloaks they did upon them, and kirtles therewithal,
And they went their ways from the bath-vats, and sat down in the seats of the hall.
And the water for washing the hands thereto the maiden bore
In a goodly golden ewer o'er a silver bowl to pour;
And the table polished smoothly beside them there she spread;
And thereto the reverend goodwife bare in and set the bread,
And made them cheer of the dainties that were to hand withal.
But his mother sat over against him by the doorpost of the hall,
'Gainst the high-seat leaning, and twining the distaff fine and fair:
So they reached out their hands to the victual that lay before them there.

But when the desire for meat and for drink they had done away,
Then Penelope the wiseheart began to speak and say:

"Telemachus, unto my chamber aloft now will I go
And lie on the bed that knoweth the wailing of my woe,
With many a tear bewatered since the day Odysseus fared
With Atreus' sons to Ilios. For neither hast thou dared,
Before the Wooers get them unto the house, to tell
True tale of thy father's homefare, if thereof thou knowest well."

Then Telemachus the heedful he answered and 'gan say:
"The truth will I tell thee, O mother, as plainly as I may:
To Pylos unto Nestor the folk-herd did we come,
And he took me unto guesting in the high-built hall of his home,
And cherished me kind and closely as a father might his son
New come from other countries: so did that kingly one
Amidst his sons renownèd heed me carefully and well,
But he of the toilworn Odysseus had never a tale to tell,
Nor dead nor alive: nor of any on earth had he hearkened a word.
But unto the Son of Atreus, Menelaüs spear-famed lord,
He sent me away with horses, and a jointed well-wrought car;
And there saw I Argive Helen, for whom such toils of war
On the Argives and the Trojans the will of God did lay.
And then asked me Menelaüs, loud-voiced in the battle-play,
What need had brought me thither to Lacedæmon divine;
And therewith I told him truly straight out that tale of mine,
And therewithal he answered, and thus in words he said:

"'Hah, surely are they minded to lay them adown in the bed
Of a man that is a great-heart, and they the puny men:
As when a hind hath been laying in a mighty lion's den,
Her fawns new born, yet suckling, and pasturing then doth pass
O'er the slopes and the dales of the mountains all plentiful of grass:
But in a while thereafter he cometh aback to his lair,

And the doom of death unseemly on those twain he layeth there:
E'en so the death unseemly on these men shall Odysseus bring.
Would to Father Zeus and Athene, and would to Apollo the king,
That, being as he was in Lesbos well-builded on a day,
When he rose against Philomeleides to strive in the wrestling-play,
And heavily threw him, rejoicing Achæan men thereby—
Ah, might he, e'en such as he was, meet that Wooers' company,
Then were they fleeting-fated and bitterly wedded indeed.
But of that whereof thou seekest, and askest me at need,
Nought crooked shall I tell thee, and in nought shall I cozen thee,
But all that the Elder told me, the soothfast Wight of the Sea,
No word thereof will I hide it, or aught from thee withhold.
He said that he saw thy father mid stark grief manifold
In the halls of the Nymph Calypso, who held him in her home
Perforce, that no might had he to his fatherland to come.
For no oar-dight ships were with him, nor any folk had he,
E'en such as might speed him homeward o'er the broad back of the sea.'

"Then Atreus' son, Menelaüs spear-famed, spake words like these,
And these things I did and departed, and the Deathless sent me a breeze,
And swiftly sped me homeward to my fatherland the dear."

So he spake, and the soul of his mother within her breast did stir;
But godlike Theoclymenus to them the word 'gan speed:
"Beworshipped wife of Odysseus Laertes' very seed!
Forsooth he wotteth not clearly; but my word, give heed to it!
For all sooth will I foretell thee, nor hide from thee one whit;
Zeus, God of the Gods, bear witness, and this table of the guest,
And this hearth of the blameless Odysseus whereto I am come to my rest,
That even now is Odysseus within his fatherland,
Sitting or wending, with tidings of these evil deeds to hand,

And the bane of all the Wooers is he planting to flourish and grow.
This I saw in the fowl-flight's token, as I sat awhile ago
On the well-decked ship, and declared it for Telemachus to heed."

Then Penelope the wise-heart a word to him did speed:
"Ah, stranger, and well were it if thy word accomplished were!
Then wouldst thou wot of my kindness, and my many gifts and fair;
And whosoever met thee, a happy man should hail."

Thus one unto the other they gave and took the tale,
But before the hall of Odysseus meanwhile the Wooers were,
And with the quoits made merry, and with casting of the spear,
Upon the fashioned pavement where they used to show their pride.
But now when it was supper, and up from the country-side
All round the flocks came, driven by those whose wont it was,
Then unto them spake Medon, who to them all did pass
As the handiest of all henchmen, and with them at the board would be:

"O youths, ye have now been merry with the strife and mastery,
So unto the house now wend you, and dight the banqueting,
For supper in due season is nought so ill a thing."

So he spake, and his word they hearkened and wended on their way,
But when they came to the homestead, where builded well it lay,
They cast their cloaks on the benches and the high-seats of the hall,
And the great sheep fell to slaying, and the fatted goats withal,
And the sleek swine: yea, and a heifer of the herd they slaughtered there,
Their feast thereby to furnish.

But meanwhile busked them to fare
From the field to the town Odysseus, and that most goodly herd,

And therewith the leader of menfolk, Eumæus, took up the word:
"O guest, since today on the wending to the town thou hast set thine heart,
And the master biddeth, so be it: albeit for my part
At home I fain had left thee the field and the fold to guard;
But I worship him, and I fear him lest he chide me afterward;
And forsooth the blame of the master is a grievous thing to bear.
But come now and let us be going, for late the day doth wear,
And soon shalt thou find it chilly toward the birth of the eventide."

But the many-wiled Odysseus made answer on his side:
"I know it, and I note it, thou biddest a man of wit;
So wend we; and lead thou the way throughout, for thou knowest it.
But if thou hast cut some cudgel, then give me the same, I pray,
That I lean me thereon, for thou saidest that slippery was the way."

He spake, and about his shoulders the foul scrip did he sling,
That was but a bunch of tatters hung on to a twisted string;
And withal Eumæus gave him a staff cut after his mind,
And the twain passed on; and the herdsmen and the hounds were left
To guard the stead: but Eumæus led on the King to the town;
And like to a wretched beggar, a staff-carle, is he grown,
And woeful is the raiment that the body of him hath.

But now whereas they wend them adown the rugged path,
Anigh to the town, they come on the fountain flowing fair,
Wrought so by men; and the townsfolk do draw their water there.
And Ithacus, and Meritus, and Polyctor wrought it out:
There the water-nourished poplars make a grove all round about,
In a ring around it standing, and the fresh cold waters fall
From the rocks above, and an altar of the Nymphs is built o'er all.
And ever the folk wayfaring make their offerings thereupon.

Thereby as now did meet them Melanthius, Dolius' son,
Driving his goats, and the flower of all the flock they were,
Unto the Wooers' banquet, and two herdsmen followed him there;
And he saw them, and fell a-chiding, and spake in unseemly wise,
With big words fiercely stirring Odysseus' heart to arise:

"Yea, yea! and thus full surely the base man leadeth the base,
And the like to the like God bringeth: where then, to what a place
Dost thou, O hapless swineherd, lead this hungry wallowing beast,
This grievous gangrel beggar, this spoiler of the feast?
Who shouldering many a door-post a-begging there will stand,
And seek reward of the morsel, and not of the bowl nor the brand;
But if unto me thou wouldst give him to guard my stead and stall,
To sweep out the folds and to carry to the kids their twigs withal,
There then the whey a-drinking he might get him a sturdy thigh.
But since ill deeds he is learned in, the toil he will not try,
Nor the work afield; but rather midst the folk will he cower still,
And ever be craving somewhat his ravening maw to fill.
But now a thing will I tell thee which shall come to pass one day,
If to the house of Odysseus the godlike he cometh his way,
About his head shall the footstools from the hands of men fly fast,
And his ribs shall wear out a many as about the house they cast."

So saying, in his folly a kick on his haunch he gave
As he passed him by: yet in nowise the King from the path he drave,
Who steadfast there abided: but the thought did Odysseus weigh,
Whether he with his club on-falling the life of him should slay,
Or to earth should dash him headlong, having lifted him up in his place:
But his wrath he withheld and forbore him. Then the swineherd looked in his face
And chid him, and hove up his hands, and prayed a mighty prayer:

"O Nymphs of the wells, Zeus' Daughters, if on thine altars here
Hath Odysseus folded the buttocks in fat for the altar fire,
And hath offered of lambs or of kids, fulfil ye now my desire!
May that man at last come hither by God to usward brought!
Then quickly thy vain-glory would he scatter unto nought
Which thou in thy pride upholdest, as thou wanderest to and fro
Through the town. Yea, evil shepherds, the sheep they soon undo."

But Melanthius the goatherd made answer to his tale:
"Gods-help! what a word he sayeth, this dog well-learned in bale!
Him on the black ship well-decked belike on a day shall I take
Aloof from the Ithacan land, that much living for me he may make.
Might but silver-bowed Apollo smite Telemachus to-day
In his halls, or 'neath the Wooers his life as surely lay,
As the homefaring day of Odysseus aloof is dead and gone!"

So saying there he left them, but slowly wending on,
But himself he hastened, and quickly to the house of the King he gat,
And hied him in, and withinward amidst of the Wooers sat:
In face of Eurymachus sat he, for he was his friend above all,
And his share of the flesh those brought him who were serving in the hall,
And thereto the reverend housewife the bread for his eating bare.

But Odysseus and the swineherd now drew exceeding near;
And on the road they stayed them, for about them came along
The voice of the hollow lyre, as Phemius sent forth the song.
Then Odysseus caught the swineherd by the hand and spake out there:

"Eumæus, this is the house of Odysseus, the dwelling fair;
And 'twere easy to see and to mark, yea e'en midst many an one.
There chamber riseth on chamber, and the garth is deftly done

With a wall, and all embattled, and every double door
Is well fenced from the foeman; no man could win it by war.
And a many men meseemeth therein are feasting well,
For the savour of fat goeth upward, and the lyre her tale doth tell,
E'en she whom the God ordaineth for the feast's own sister fair."

Then thou, O swineherd Eumæus, didst speak and answer there:
"Thou art right, and herein, as ever, thou art of those that know:
But let us now take counsel how all is like to go.
Either be first to enter the well-built house and fair,
And mingle with the Wooers, and I will abide thee here:
Or if thou wilt, abide here, and forth before will I.
But no long while be lingering, lest some one thee espy
And drive thee off or smite thee: lay now these things to heart."

But the toil-stout goodly Odysseus thus answered on his part:
"I know and I note; thou biddest a man that hath wit to know,
Do thou go on before me, and I will abide while ye go.
Forsooth in stripes and in peltings I am not unlearned to-day,
For I have a heart that is hardy, and have borne many griefs by the way,
Of the waves of the sea and of battle; and let this be numbered with those;
Since forsooth the ravening belly may not be hidden close,
The forger of bale, that giveth to menfolk many an ill,
For whose sake the ships well thwarted will men array them still,
To carry woe for the hapless o'er the sea unharvested."

But while each unto the other such things as this they said,
Lo a hound his head was uplifting and pricking his ears as he lay,
E'en Argus, the hound of Odysseus, whom he bred in the earlier day;
But no joy of him had he gotten ere to Ilios' holy land
He went. In days aforetime would the young men take him in hand,

The goats of the wold and the roe-deer and the hares to follow fast.
But aloof had been his master, and there he lay outcast
Amongst the dung of oxen and of mules, whereof there lay
A plenty about the garth-gate till folk should have it away,
The thralls of the lord Odysseus, to dung his acres wide.
There then did the woodhound Argus all full of ticks abide;
But now so soon as he noted Odysseus drawing anear
He wagged his tail, and fawning he laid down either ear,
But had no might to drag him nigher from where he lay
To his master, who beheld him and wiped a tear away
That he lightly hid from Eumæus, unto whom he spake and said:

"Eumæus, much I marvel at the dog on the dung-heap laid;
Fair-shapen is his body, but nought I know indeed
If unto this his fairness he hath had good running speed,
Or is but like unto some; men's table-dogs I mean,
Which but because of their fairness lords cherish to be seen."

Then thou, O swineherd Eumæus, didst speak and answer thus:
"Yea, this is the hound of the man that hath died aloof from us;
And if yet to do and to look on he were even such an one
As Odysseus left behind him when to Troy he gat him gone,
Then wouldest thou wonder beholding his speed and hardihood,
For no monster that he followed through the depths of the tangled wood
Would he blench from, and well he wotted of their trail and where it led.
But now ill he hath, since his master in an alien land is dead,
And no care of him have the women, that are heedless here and light;
Since thralls whenso they are missing their masters' rule and might
No longer are they willing to do the thing that should be;
For Zeus the loud-voiced taketh half a man's valiancy
Whenso the day of thraldom hath hold of him at last."

So saying into the homestead of the happy place he passed,
And straight to the hall he wended 'mid the Wooers overbold.
But the murky doom of the death-day of Argus now took hold
When he had looked on Odysseus in this the twentieth year.

But Telemachus the godlike, the first of all men there, [straightway,
Saw the swineherd come through the house, and he nodded to him
And called him; who looked around him and took a bench that lay
Near-hand, and thereon the carver was wont to sit withal,
Dealing much flesh to the Wooers as they feasted in the hall.
This then to Telemachus' table as now Eumæus drew,
And thereon sat over against him, and the henchman came thereto,
And took and dealt him his share, and bread from the basket withal.

But hard on his heels was Odysseus, and he entered his house and his hall
Most like to a wretched beggar, and a staff-carle bent and old,
And woeful was the raiment that his body did enfold.
There he sat on the ashen threshold within the feast-hall's door,
Leaned against a cypress pillar, which the wright in days of yore
Had smoothed by dint of cunning and straightened by the line.

Then Telemachus called to Eumæus, and spake to the herder of swine
When a whole loaf he had taken from out the basket fair,
And of the flesh moreover as much as his hands might bear:
"Go take and give to the stranger, and bid him now to wend
From Wooer unto Wooer, and beg from end to end,
For nothing good, meseemeth, to a needy man is shame."

So the swineherd when he had hearkened straight unto Odysseus came,
And standing close anigh him a wingèd word spake he:
"Telemachus giveth thee this, O guest, and biddeth thee

To beg of all the Wooers, and from end to end to speed,
For he saith that shame avails not the man that lives by bede."

Then the many-wiled Odysseus he spake and answered again:
"King Zeus, Telemachus make me a happy man of men!
And may all things befal him as his soul would have them to be!"
So he spake, and in both hands took it, and set it presently
Before his feet and laid it on the scrip, that ugly thing;
And he ate the while the minstrel in the hall ceased not to sing.
But when his meat was ended and the holy singing ceased,
And uprose the din of the Wooers throughout the hall of feast,
Then Athene stood by Odysseus, Laertes' son of yore,
And egged him on of the Wooers to gather cakes good store,
That he might know the righteous from the reckless midst of these;
Albeit no man among them from his bane would she release.

So on from the right he started, and forth his hand did he hold
To each man there, as he had been a beggar from of old;
And they had compassion and gave him, and wondered at him there,
And were asking of each other what the man, and whence he were.
Then spake to them Melanthius, who the goatherd long had been:
"Hearken to me, O Wooers of our most renownèd Queen,
Concerning this man, for I saw him but a little while ago;
And forsooth it was the swineherd that hath led him hereunto,
But himself I know not clearly nor of whom he boasts him to be."

So he spake; but Antinoüs thereon chid the swineherd, and quoth he:
"O thou most ill-famed swineherd, why broughtst thou this man to the [town?
Have we nought enough of bedesmen that wander up and down,
And grievous irksome beggars, the spoil-feasts of the land?
And deemest thou this so gainful that they gather here their band,

And eat up thy master's life-store, that him too for a guest ye must take?"

Thereon Eumæus the swineherd in this wise answered and spake:
"Antinoüs, though thou be noble, yet ye say things nothing fair,
For who would a guest be bidding, when himself from otherwhere
He cometh: save he should happen on a craftsman of the folk
As a seer, or a healer of sickness, or a woodwright deft of stroke?
Yea, or a holy singer, whose song shall please us well?
For welcome are these to all men on the limitless earth that dwell.
But none would bid a beggar himself to waste and wear.
Yet hard art thou for ever amidst these Wooers here
To the homemen of Odysseus, and to me the most of all.
Though I heed not, while yet with the living within this house and hall
Dwell Telemachus the godlike and the sage Penelope."

Him then Telemachus answered, and in this wise spake he:
"Nay, peace! nor answer this man with many words I pray.
'Tis the wont of Antinoüs ever the strife on us to lay
With bitter words; and the others to like things oft hath he stirred."

So he spake and to Antinoüs put forth a wingèd word:
"Thou carest for me, Antinoüs, as a father cares for a son!
Since thou biddest bid the guest here with a hard word to begone
From out of the house and the hall; and may God forbid it to be!
Take somewhat and give him! I grudge not, nay rather I pray it thee.
And herein heed not my mother, nor any within the house
Of the thralls or any other of Odysseus the glorious!
Yet within thy breast meseemeth no such a thought there came;
Yea, rather than give to another thyself wouldst thou eat the same."

So therewithal Antinoüs he saith and answereth now:

"Telemachus, wordy, unbridled in anger! and what sayest thou?
If all the Wooers should give him a gift as bounteous
As I, for three months henceforward should we stave him off from the house."
And he took up and showed a footstool which lay 'neath the table there,
Whereon he was wont to be resting his feet the sleek and fair;
But gifts gave all the others, and with flesh and bread good store
They filled his scrip; and Odysseus would get him back once more
To the threshold, there to be tasting of the gifts of the Achæan lords:
But he stayed him by Antinoüs and spake in such-like words:

"Give, friend! since thou nowise seemest of Achæans in this hall
To be the worst: nay, rather the best and the king of all.
So thou forsooth shouldest give me a greater deal of bread,
That I the fame of thy bounty o'er the boundless earth may spread.
For I indeed aforetime midst men a house did have;
And rich was I and happy, and oft to the wanderer gave,
Whatso he were, and what errand to my homestead drew him anigh.
And thralls had I out of number, and all other things whereby
Men hold a plenteous living and rich are held to be;
But Zeus the son of Cronos he willed the waste of me:
For with wide-wandering sea-thieves he sent me forth to go
A long road unto Egypt, that my life he might undo.
So in the River of Egypt my shapen ships I stayed,
And there my trusty fellows e'en one and all I bade
That they by the ships should be biding and draw them up a-land:
And the watchers I bade to betake them to the heights and there to stand.
But they yielded to fierce folly, and went after the lusts of their might;
The fair fields of the men of Egypt they fell to wasting forthright,
And they drave away their women and their children, and thereby
The men they slew: but quickly to the city came the cry,

And men heard the shout and gathered when the day dawn shone again,
And the footmen and the horsemen were over all the plain,
And the light of brass a-flashing; and Zeus the thunder-glad
Cast ill fear amidst of my fellows, and no heart any had
To outface the host in battle, for the bale all round us drew.
There many a man of my fellows with the whetted brass they slew,
And some alive they led them to toil as thralls in need;
But me to a guest that happed there they gave to Cyprus to lead,
E'en Dmetor, son of Iasus, in Cyprus rich and great.
And thence now come I hither bearing my sorrows' weight."

Him then Antinoüs answered, and spake unto him thus:
"What God this plague, this mar-feast, hath hither sent to us?
Stand clear! stand out amidmost, aloof from my board and me!
Lest thou come to a bitter Egypt and a Cyprus ill for thee,
Thou shameless among beggars! thou sturdy one to stand
And in turn to beg from all men, and they give thee out of hand,
Reckless and nought close-fisted, nor knowing any ruth
In bestowing the wealth of another: when much lies by each forsooth."

But to him the wily Odysseus thus spake as he drew aback:
"Woe worth! that thou with thy fairness the mind of wit shouldest lack,
Not a grain of salt hadst thou given in thine house to the wanderer,
Who now in another's sitting hast no heart to take from the cheer
A crust of bread to give me; and abundance by thee lies."

But the wrath the more for his speaking in Antinoüs' heart did arise,
And therewith scowling upon him a wingèd word he spake:
"Now deem I that nought happy thy way through the house shalt thou make
As thou goest aback, since forsooth thou babblest blame in the hall."

Then he caught up the stool and cast it, and struck his right shoulder withal
At the nethermost part of the back: yet stark he stood, rockfast,
And nothing there he tottered for all Antinoüs' cast;
But in silence his head he nodded, in his deep heart deeming of ill.

So he sat down again on the threshold, and the scrip that had gotten its fill
He took and spake to the Wooers, as there he set it down:
"Hearken to me, O Wooers of the Queen of great renown,
While I speak what the heart in my bosom is bidding me now tell out:
Nothing there is of anguish, and nought is the trouble no doubt
When a man is smitten a-warring, and about his goods is the fight,
Whether it be o'er the oxen, or the sheep-flock woolly white.
But me hath Antinoüs smitten for my miserable maw,
The ravening thing that such evil on the folk of men doth draw.
But if there be Gods and Wreakers of them that beg their bread,
Then may Antinoüs hap on death's ending ere he wed."

But to him then spake Antinoüs, the lord Eupeithes' son:
"Eat thou and be quiet, O stranger, or otherwhere begone,
Lest hand and foot through the homestead the young men thee shall hale,
And strip the skin from off thee, for thy tongue that telleth of bale."

So he spake; but great wrath gathered about them at his words,
And thus would one be saying of those high-hearted lords:
"Antinoüs, ill thou diddest, the wretched guest to smite,
And if God yet dwelleth in heaven, then doomed art thou outright.
Yea, too, the Gods in the likeness of guests from far away,
Since all-wise are they shapen, through men's cities oft will stray,
And look on the wrong and well-doing that midst of men are wrought."

In thuswise spake the Wooers, but their words he heeded nought.

But Telemachus, great in his heart grew the grief for the smitten man,
And therewith from under his eyelids adown the teardrops ran,
And he shook his head in silence, and bale in his heart did brood.

But hereof moreover hearkened Penelope wise of mood, [forthright:
How the man in her halls had been smitten, and she spake to her maids
"May Apollo, the glory of bowmen, thee too Antinoüs smite!"

But Eurynome the goodwife a word thereto she said:
"Yea, if our prayers' fulfilment might anywise be sped,
Not one of these should come to the fair-throned Dawn of Day."

Then Penelope the prudent thuswise thereto did say:
"Yea, nurse, all these are hateful, since they devise but ill,
But Antinoüs, he seemeth to the Black Doom likest still.
Lo you, a hapless stranger, a-begging at men's hands,
Strays through the house, since suchwise his utter lack commands,
And his scrip were the others filling, and giving to the wight,
While he his back and shoulder with the footstool needs must smite."

So, sitting in her chamber to her women thus she spake,
While Odysseus the most goodly in the hall his meal did make.
But she called to the goodly swineherd, and him she spake unto:
"Hither now, O good Eumæus! to the guest with the bidding go
To come hither, that I may hail him, and ask of him a word,
If he perchance of Odysseus toil-laden may have heard,
Or seen him with eyes, for meseemeth he hath wandered by many a way."

Then thou, O swineherd Eumæus, didst answer her and say:
"Ah, Queen, and if those Achæans would hold their peace awhile,
And he might speak, full surely thine heart should he beguile;

For three nights at my booth I held him, and three days I kept him at home,
And first from a ship a-fleeing unto meward did he come.
But the tale of all his sorrows not yet to an end hath he brought.
—Lo, as a man looks on a minstrel, and a man whom the Gods have taught,
And sweet are the words of his singing, and therefor mortals long,
And ceaseless him would they hearken whenever he wakeneth the song;
E'en so did this man soothe me as he sat in the stead with me;
And the house-friend of Odysseus he tells himself to be,
In Crete erewhile a dweller, whence cometh Minos' race,
Who now with woe beladen, drifting from place to place,
Is come here; and he saith he hath tidings of Odysseus alive and anigh
In the fat land of Thesprotians, and stands by it steadfastly;
And how that abundant treasure he hath for his home and his stead."

But Penelope the heart-wise to him made answer and said:
"Go call him, that he may tell it to me e'en face to face:
But for these let them sit merry about the doors of the place,
Or up and down through the chambers, since with their hearts 'tis well!
For untouched the gear is lying in the halls where they should dwell,
Sweet wine and bread, and their homemen they live upon all this,
While they our house are haunting all days, and no day there is
But they slaughter the sheep and the oxen, and the fatted goats of the [stead,
And there they hold the revel, and drink the wine dark-red
In wanton wise: wealth waneth, and no man now we have,
E'en such as was Odysseus, the bane from the house to stave.
Ah, were but Odysseus come, to his fatherland would he haste!
Soon then with his son would he wreak him on these men and their wrong [and their waste."
As she spake did Telemachus sneeze a great sneeze, and through the hall
It rang with a terrible sound, and Penelope laughed withal,
And straightway unto Eumæus she set a word on the wing:

"Go, speed thee, Eumæus, and call him, and the guest before me bring.
What! heedest thou not how my son hath sneezed to all words that I said?
So the death of all these Wooers shall not be a thing unsped,
Nor shall any thereof escape it, his death and his doomful day.
But one thing now do I tell thee, and the same to thy heart do thou lay,
Whenas I shall wot of this man that he speaketh all truth indeed
I will do on him cloak and kirtle and fair shall be that weed."

So she spake, and the swineherd hearkened and on his errand went,
And standing anigh to Odysseus a wingèd word he sent:
"O thou, my guest and father, the wise Penelope,
Telemachus' mother, calleth; for her heart will have it to be
That she ask some tale of her husband despite the weight of her woe;
And if of thy soothfast telling she come hereafter to know
She shall do on thee cloak and kirtle, whereof thou art most in need.
So begging thy bread midst the people thy belly shalt thou feed,
And they shall give unto thee whose hearts thereof be fain."

Then the toil-stout goodly Odysseus thuswise he answered again:
"Eumæus, e'en now straightway to the wise Penelope,
The Daughter of Icarius, would I tell all things as they be,
For true tale of him am I wotting, and we twain have borne one toil:
But this fierce folk of the Wooers, full sore I fear their broil,
For the pride of them and their riot to the iron heaven doth fare.
And look you, when he smote me and gave me grief to bear,
As about the house I wended and doing hurt to none,
Telemachus did not save me, nor he, nor any one.
So Penelope go bid ye in the hall to tarry as yet,
For all that she may be eager, until that the sun be set,
And then let her ask of the day of her husband's coming aback,
When she by the fire hath set me; for my raiment's woeful lack

Thereof full well thou wottest, since thee did I first beseech.
[his speech:
So he spake, and departed the swineherd, having hearkened the word of
But as he went over the threshold unto him Penelope spake; [make?
"Thou bringest him not? What matter doth the mind of this beggar-man
Doth he fear some man out of measure, or is he shamefast still,
About the house as he wendeth? Shame fitteth a beggar but ill."

Then thou, O swineherd Eumæus, didst answer even so:
"He speaketh according to reason, as many a man might do,
Because the pride and the riot of masterful men doth he shun.
But he biddeth thee abide him till the going down of the sun.
And this, O Queen, meseemeth, shall be meeter for thee forsooth,
That alone thou speak with the stranger and hearken the word of his
mouth."

But unto him then answered all-wise Penelope:
"Nought witless is the stranger whatsoever man he be,
For no men are there certes 'mid all men born to die
So masterful as these men to work so wickedly."

In suchwise was she speaking: but the swineherd thereupon
To the Wooers' throng betook him now his errand was all done,
And unto Telemachus straightway a wingèd word he spake,
Head laid unto head, that the others thereof might nothing make:
"Dear lord, my ways am I wending to guard my swine and the gear,
Thy living, and mine also: but do thou heed all things here.
And first thyself do thou safe-guard, and look thou to it still
Lest thou take a hurt; for a many of Achæans wish thee ill,
Whom may Zeus undo for ever ere they become our bane!"

But Telemachus the heedful he spake and answered again:

"E'en so shall it be, O father. Go, after thine evening cheer,
But come betimes on the morrow, and bring slaughter-beasts full fair.
But the rest, e'en I and the Deathless all that will heed and meet."

So he spake, but the other straightway on the smooth bench took his seat;
But when to his mind both of meat and of drink he was filled withal
He went on his way to the swine-droves, and left the garth and the hall
Fulfilled with folk a-feasting, and merry now were they
With the song and the dance, for at hand was the eventide of the day.

BOOK XVIII.

ARGUMENT.

ODYSSEUS BEING MOCKED BY THE BEGGAR IRUS, AND THREATENED BY HIM, OVERCOMES HIM IN BUFFETS. THE WOOERS GIVE GIFTS TO PENELOPE. THE HANDMAID MELANTHO AND EURYMACHUS MOCK ODYSSEUS.

NOW there came a common beggar, who was wont to beg his way,
Through the Ithacan folk; whose belly still ravening without stay
Passed all in eating and drinking: nor had he any might
Or strength of limb and body, though a big carle to the sight:
Arnæus his name; his mother beworshipped called him so
From his birth; but all the younglings as Irus him did know,
Because he went on errands at men's bidding up and down.
So he came, and would drive Odysseus from the house that was his own,
And chid him and bespake him in wingèd words and fleet. 9

"Out from the garth, old gangrel! lest they drag thee forth by the feet.
See'st not how all are winking on me, as bidding me
To drag thee forth? Yet, nathless, I grudge to handle thee.
So up! lest soon betwixt us be strife of handy blows."

Then bespake him the wise Odysseus, as he frowned from knitted brows:
"What, carle! I do thee no evil, and no words with thee I make,
And begrudge thee no man's giving, how much soever ye take.
The threshold shall hold us both, nor hast thou any need
To begrudge me the goods of another. A gangrel thou seemest indeed

As I be; and 'tis for the Gods goodhap on us both to bestow:
But egg me not to the handstrife, lest the wrath upon me grow,
Lest, old as I be, I befoul and bebloody thy lips and thy breast;
And then forsooth to-morrow shall I have increase of rest;
For nowise twice meseemeth shalt thou turn thee about to come
To the hall of the son of Laertes and to see Odysseus' home."

Therewith the gangrel Irus unto him in his anger spake:
"Out! how this greedy glutton a tripping speech doth make!
E'en as a chimney carline; and to him might I meet out ill
With a double stroke, and earthward every tooth in his head would I spill,
As though they were teeth of a swine that wasteth the standing wheat.
Now gird thee! that all may behold us how we in the battle may meet,
For to nought shall come thy fighting with a younger man, I ween."

So there by the lofty doorway, on the threshold smooth and clean,
With all their hearts set to it they roused the wrath of fight;
But unto the twain now hearkened Antinoüs' holy might,
And therewith amidst pleasant laughter he bespake the Wooers thus:

"Friends, never such a goodhap hath yet befallen us,
Such joyance as God bringeth unto our house and home,
For the stranger here and Irus to fighting-pitch are come:
So swift let us set them to it, that they to work may fall."

So he spake; and there a-laughing they rose up one and all,
And round those foul-clad beggars all men were gathered there.
Then Antinoüs bespake them, Eupeithes' son the fair:
"Now all ye noble Wooers hearken the word I say:
Two goat paunches cook by the fire, that there we laid away,
Stuffed full of fat and of blood, for supper to be dight;

Now whichso of these shall vanquish and be better in the fight
He shall rise up then and take him whichso of these he will,
And thenceforth with us shall he feast, and him and none other still
Will we suffer with us to mingle, and here to make his bede."

So Antinoüs spake, and the others all fain his word they heed.
But to them spake Odysseus the wise, from the wit in his heart that was born:
"O friends, 'tis no work for an elder with toil and trouble outworn
To fight with a man that is younger; but my belly, the worker of ill,
To my bale and my quelling with stripes must needs be egging me still.
So come; do all ye swear me with an oath that is stark and strong,
No man for the pleasure of Irus against me to upbear the wrong,
And with heavy hand to smite me, and for him to quell me with might."

So he spake; and as he prayed them, so all they swore aright;
And when the oath was accomplished, and all had sworn amain,
Then Telemachus' holy might made answer, and spake again:

"O guest, if thine hardy heart and thine high mood bid thee to chase
This man, then fear no other Achæan here in the place.
For whosoever smites thee with a many shall have to do.
Lo, I am the host, and moreover these kings say yea thereto,
E'en Antinoüs and Eurymachus, and both these are prudent men."

So he spake, and all yeasaid it; and Odysseus fell to then
And girt his rags round his middle, and showed fair-shapen thighs,
And mighty, and broad shoulders, and breast fashioned in likewise,
And stark stout arms: and Athene drew nigh and stood by him,
And for the People's Shepherd made greater every limb,
And all the Wooers were smitten with wonder and amaze,
And thus would one be speaking to his neighbour next in place:

"Now winneth Irus un-Irused a self-made bale no doubt,
Such a thigh from amidst of his rag-gear as the old man thrusteth out!"

So they spake; and the heart of Irus quaked at the coming bale;
But e'en so the homemen girt him, and forward him did hale,
While with fear his flesh was creeping upon his every limb:
But Antinoüs bespake him, and with words fell chiding him:

"Foul fall thy life, big braggart! best wert thou not to be
If so sore hereat thou tremblest, and blenchest so fearfully
Before this old carle, wearied with the trouble and toil he hath won.
But now a thing do I tell thee, and forsooth shall it be done:
If this man overcome thee, and be the best of the twain,
On a black ship shall I thrust thee, and send thee on to the main
To King Echetus, the maimer of every mortal anear;
And the ears and the nose from off thee with the ruthless brass shall he shear,
And tear off thy manly members for the dogs to devour raw."

But so much the more for that word did the trembling over him draw,
And they haled him into the ring, and both held up their hands for the fray.
But the toil-stout goodly Odysseus he pondered either way,
If he so should smite that the soul from the man as he fell should fly,
Or should lightly smite him and lay him along on the earth to lie.
And better him-seemed as he pondered to lay on the lighter stroke,
Lest some deeming of him they might gather, those lords of Achæan folk.

So they held up their hands, and Irus to his shoulder right did win,
But his neck 'neath the ear smote Odysseus, and crushed the bones within,
And up through his mouth came gushing the purple blood straightway,
As he fell in the dust a-moaning, and gnashed his teeth as he lay,
The earth with his feet a-spurning. But the Wooers haughty and high

Held up their hands, and for laughter were hard at hand to die.
By his feet then Odysseus dragged him through the porch to the garth of the hall,
And the very gate of the cloister, and there by the in-garth's wall
He leaned him up, and thrust on him his staff for his hand to take,
And therewith his voice he uttered, and a winged word he spake:

"Sit there now, and be warding the swine and dogs from the door,
But of bedesmen and of strangers be thou chieftain never more,
Thou sorry wretch! lest thou win thee some worser bale at last."

He spake, and over his shoulders his loathly scrip he cast,
The tattered thing whose baldrick was a rope-yarn twisted thin,
And he went and sat down on the threshold; and they withal went in,
And amidst of merry laughter they greeted him and spake:

"May Zeus and all the Deathless give thee, O guest, to take that dear.
The thing that thou wouldest of all things, and that most thine heart holds
Whereas this measureless glutton thou hast caused at last to forbear
From begging amidst of the people; whom unto the main shall we bring
To the maimer of all mortals, e'en Echetus the King."

So they spake; and for valiant Odysseus that omen gladdened his heart.
But Antinoüs set by him the great paunch as his part,
Fulfilled with the fat and the blood; and the like did Amphinomus do:
For he took two loaves from the basket, and laid them thereunto,
And with the gold cup pledged him, and spake, and thus said he:

"Hail, guest and father! henceforward a happy man may'st thou be,
For all that thou now art holden by many an evil need!"

But thuswise spake in answer Odysseus of many a rede:

"Amphinomus, surely I deem thee a man of wisdom and wit,
And come of a glorious father; for his fame, I have heard of it,
That Nisus of Dulichium was a man of wealth and might,
And of him they say thou wert gotten, and knowest of speech and of right.
So one thing now will I tell thee; and thou, do thou hearken and heed.
There is nought more mightless than man of all that Earth doth breed,
Of all that on Earth breatheth and that creepeth over it.
For while God giveth him valour, and his limbs are lithe and fit,
He saith that never hereafter the bale shall he abide;
But when the Gods all-happy fashion his evil tide,
Perforce that load of sorrow his stout heart beareth then;
For in such wise still is fashioned the mood of earthly men,
As the Father of Gods and of menfolk hath brought about their day.
Yea, e'en I amongst men was happy in times now passed away,
And wrought full many a folly, and gave way to my heart's desire.
For I trusted in the backing of my brethren and my sire.
Therefore indeed let no man in unrighteous fashion live,
But hold in peace and quiet such things as God may give.
But, O me! how I see of the Wooers what fearful folly they plan,
Whereas the goods they are wasting, and shaming the wife of the man,
Who not for long I tell thee from his well-loved fatherland
Will yet be aloof; nay, rather e'en now he is hard at hand.
But thou—God lead thee hence, that this man thou may'st not meet
When he hath gotten him homeward to his land the dear and sweet;
For when under his roof he cometh, and they deal betwixt and between,
The Wooers and he, nought bloodless shall be the work I ween."

He poured and he drank of the wine heart-lulling as he spoke,
And gave back the cup to the hands of the orderer of the folk;
Who as through the house he wended on his heart bore heavy load;
And he shook his head as he pondered, for his heart the bale forebode.

But nought his doom might he flee from; for Athene bound him there
To be quelled by Telemachus' hand and the mighty edge of the spear.
So he went back and sat on the high-seat, whence he had arisen erewhile.

Now the Goddess, the Grey-eyed Athene, she set a thought of guile
In the heart of Icarius' daughter, all-wise Penelope,
To show herself to the Wooers, that e'en as much as might be
She might open their hearts unto her, and win worship even more
From her son and from her husband than she had had before.
So she laughed with empty laughter, and thus she fell to say:

"Eurynome, longeth my heart as never yet on a day
To show myself to the Wooers, for as loth as they are to me;
And a word to my son will I speak, that better spoken will be,
Not so wholly to blend with these Wooers, the men of masterful will;
For soft are the words of their babble, but behind they ponder the ill."

Then Eurynome the handmaid she answered and 'gan say:
"My child, all this that thou speakest is on the meetest way.
From thy son do thou hide it nothing, and this word of thine go tell.
But first wash thou thy body, and thy cheeks anoint thou well,
Nor bear thy face before him so stained with tear on tear,
For ill it is to sorrow, and never to forbear;
And of such age now is thy son, as thou prayedst the Deathless of grace
That thou might'st yet behold him with the beard upon his face."

But her in turn thus answered the wise Penelope:
"Eurynome, nowise bid it, though sore thou carest for me,
That I should wash my body and sleek me o'er with oil;
For the Gods that hold Olympus, my fairness did they soil
Since the day when he departed in the hollow ship to wend.

But now to me Autonoë and Hippodameia send,
That when I go down to the feast-hall they may stand on either side,
Since for shame amid the menfolk alone I may not bide."

So she spake; and fared the goodwife through the feast-hall of the place,
With the message for the women to bid them come their ways.
But the Goddess, the Grey-eyed Athene, thought on another thing,
For on that Icarius' Daughter the sweet sleep did she bring,
That she lay aback and slumbered, and all her limbs withal
Lay loose in the chair. And the Goddess, the glory of them all,
Gave deathless gifts, that the Achæans might wonder at the sight:
And first she cleared her visage with the deathless beauty bright,
Wherewith doth sleek her over Cytheræa of the crown,
When she unto the Graces and the lovely dance goes down;
And she made her taller and greater for every one to see,
And made her skin yet whiter than the new-sawn ivory.

So wrought the Glory of Godhead, and went her ways withal,
The while the white-armed handmaids drew thither from the hall,
And came their ways a-talking; then the sweet sleep sped away,
And she stroked her cheek with her hand, and therewith fell to say:

"Soft slumber hath covered me over for all my weight of woe,
And oh! that as soft a death-tide might Artemis bring me now,
That no more in lamentation I my life and soul might wear,
In my longing for all the valour of my lord the loved and dear,
For he amidst the Achæans was the man most excellent."

So speaking, down from her gleaming fair bower aloft she went,
Not lonely, for two handmaids went beside her therewithal.
But when came that Glory of Women to the Wooers in the hall

She stood beside the pillar of the roof-tree fashioned stout,
And withal her gleaming headgear she held her face about,
And a wise and trusty handmaid each side of her there stood.
But the limbs of those were loosened, and love beguiled their mood,
And all they longed full sorely to lie by her abed.

But unto Telemachus spake she, to her son beloved she said:
"Telemachus, nothing steadfast is thy mind and thy wit as of yore;
While yet thou wert but little thou hadst gainfuller wit and more. [youth,
But now when great thou art waxen, and hast reached the full measure of
And a stranger might say, beholding thy stature and beauty forsooth,
That thou must needs be the offspring of a happy man and good,
No longer art thou seemly of thy wit and of thy mood.
What a deed in thine house hath befallen! yea, e'en such a deed as this,
That thou hast suffered a stranger therein to be handled amiss.
How now, if a guest be sitting within our house and hall,
And to him from this mishandling some evil should befall?
Then blame and shame and unworship from men should come on thee."

Her then Telemachus answered, and in this wise spake he:
"Though thou art wroth, my mother, yet me it angers not.
Each thing that ever passeth, thereof I heed and wot,
The better things and the worser: and erst but a babe was I.
But lo you, not all matters can I handle heedfully;
For out of myself they drive me, thronging thick and all around,
And ever devising evil: and for me is no helper found.
But in truth this broil befell not betwixt Irus and the guest
By the willing of the Wooers; and the stranger had the best.
Would to Father Zeus and Athene, and King Apollo withal,
That even so the Wooers within our house and hall
Might bow their heads so vanquished! Some out there in the close,

And some within the chambers, and the limbs of all grow loose,
Even as now that Irus by the garth-gate sitteth there
Wagging his head, and faring as a drunken man may fare;
Nor hath might to stand straight on his feet, nor homeward get him aback,
Or whatso place he is bound for: for his limbs they lie all slack."

Thus unto one another the speech and the tale they sped;
But Eurymachus fell to speaking to Penelope and said:
"O Daughter of Icarius, all-wise Penelope,
If all Achæans of Argos the Iasian looked on thee,
Then many more of Wooers in the house wherein ye dwell
Would be feasting on the morrow; for all women ye excel
In goodliness and stature, and in mind well-fashioned within."

Then Penelope the all-wise, such answer did she win:
"My body's guise, Eurymachus, and the worth that was in me,
The Deathless marred, when for Ilios the Argives took the sea,
And with them went Odysseus that was my wedded lord.
And might he but get him homeward this life of mine to ward
Then greater were my glory, and fairer far its tale.
But now do I grieve, whereas God speeds on me abundance of bale.
Yea, in the day and the hour when he left his fatherland
How he spake, as a while he held me by the wrist of my right hand:
'O woman, nowise deem I that all the well-greaved folk,
The Achæans, shall win homeward unscathed of any stroke:
For the tale goes that the Trojans wot well of the warrior's craft;
That there be good spear-casters and shooters of the shaft,
And backers of swift-foot horses: all they that be the best,
The strife of the balanced battle to doom the speediest.
Wherefore nowise am I wotting if the Gods shall give me speed
To my home, or in Troy I be taken: so all things here do thou heed.

Care thou for my father and mother, who dwell beneath my roof,
As now, yea even better, when I am far aloof.
But when our son thou beholdest with a beard upon his face
Then wed thee with whom thou willest, and leave him here in the place.'
—In this wise he spake unto me; and now time fulfilleth all,
And the night when this wedding beloathed must now at the last befall
To me undone; and my welfare doth Zeus take all away.
And withal on my heart and my soul this sore grief comes on a day;
For not thus have Wooers been wont, nor thus have they hitherto done,
When the goodly wife or the daughter of some great and wealthy one
They were fain to woo, and thereover with each other they must strive:
Then they forsooth the oxen and the fat sheep ever drive,
A feast for the friends of the damsel, and of rich gifts give good store,
But eat not the wealth of another paying no atonement therefor."

So she spake; and the goodly Odysseus toil-stout was glad the while
That she drew the gifts from out them, and their hearts did so beguile
With wheedling words; but far others she pondered in her heart.

But Antinoüs, son of Eupeithes, spake to her on his part:
"O Daughter of Icarius, all-wise Penelope,
Take thou the gifts of Achæans whatso they will bring to thee;
For to gainsay the gift of the giver is neither good nor fair.
But not to our lands will we get us, nor any otherwhere,
Before to the man thou art wedded who of all the Achæans is best."

So Antinoüs spake, and his speaking seemed good to all the rest,
And each man sent his henchman the gifts thereto to bear.
For Antinoüs thither brought he a great robe wondrous fair,
All 'broidered, with twelve brooches thereon all wrought of gold,
And every one well-fitted with hooks well-wrought to hold.

For Eurymachus a collar of gold most deftly done,
All hung about with amber that shone out as the sun.
And the swains of Eurydamas brought him two earrings wrought full fair,
Three-beaded; and great glory from out them glittered there.
And the henchman of Pisander, Polyctor's son the king,
Brought up with him a neck-chain, a fair and seemly thing;
And each one of the Achæans for fair gifts to give her sent.
So therewith the Glory of Women to the upper chamber went,
But the lovely gifts bore the handmaids as they went with her along.

But now unto the dancing and the love-fain tide of song
Turned the Wooers and were merry, and for nightfall there did they dwell,
And there as they made merry the black night on them fell.
Then three braziers amidst of the feast-hall they set up presently,
To give a light to all men; and around laid the bavins dry,
Sear from of old and sapless, with the brass new-cleft to burn,
And they set the brands amidst them: but they quickened the blaze in turn,
The maids of Odysseus the toil-worn; and unto them in a while
Spake Odysseus himself, the Zeus-bred, the man of many a guile.

"O maids of Odysseus, the king aloof for so long a tide,
Go now your ways to the chamber where the holy Queen doth abide,
And there the rock be twirling and do her pleasure there,
The wool with your hands a-carding as ye sit in the chamber fair,
But I for all these Wooers will give enough of light.
E'en if they will to be biding the Gold-throned Day-dawn bright,
Yet shall they not outdo me, for hardy am I to abide."

He spake: but they fell a-laughing, and each the other eyed,
And that fair-cheeked Melantho, she chid him shamefully;
E'en Dolius' daughter, fostered of Queen Penelope

As her very own; who had given her of playthings bounteous store;
Yet in her heart she held not Penelope's sorrow sore,
But with Eurymachus ever in loving wise was blent.
So now unto Odysseus these chiding words she sent:

"O wretched guest, now surely right out of thy wit thou art!
Since to sleep at some man's stithy thou hast no will to depart,
Or unto the place of gangrels; but must tarry babbling here
Midst these many men, in thy boldness, and thine heart without a fear.
Yea, either wine now holdeth thine heart, or else maybe
E'en such is thy mind at all times, and thou babblest emptily.
Exultest thou in thy beating of the gangrel Irus there?
Yet now lest some one better stand up, do thou beware,
Who with sturdy hands shall smite thee a buffet over thine head,
And with plenteous blood befoul thee and drive thee forth from the [stead."
Then spake the shifty Odysseus, as he scowled from knitted brow:
"O dog! I will hasten and get me to Telemachus even now,
And tell him thy tale, that limb-meal thy body he may shear."

So he spake, and with words so spoken the women did he scare,
And they went their ways through the house, and their limbs, all loose they grew
With the fear of him; for they deemed it that he spake what was but true.

But quickening up the firebrands by the blazing hearth he stood,
Giving heed and eye to all men; and in his mind and his mood
He pondered other matters that should be accomplished yet.

But those haughty Wooers Athene not even now would she let
From their sore heart-grieving outrage, that into the heart yet more

Of Odysseus son of Laertes might sink the sorrow sore.
So Eurymachus, Polybus' son, took up the mockeries
'Gainst Odysseus; and midst of his fellows he made the laughter arise:

"Ye men the high Queen wooing, come now and hearken ye,
Till I tell you the tale of my heart and the word it biddeth me:
Nought godless this man cometh to Odysseus' house and our hands,
Since from him and his head there gleameth the very light of the brands
For no hair on his head there waxeth, however poor and small."

Then he turned his speech to Odysseus, the bane of burg and wall:
"Would'st thou, O guest, that I wage thee, if I should take thee away
Far up in the country-side (and assured should be thy pay)
To gather stones for the garth-walls and plant the saplings tall?
Then victuals would I find thee year-long; and therewithal
Would I do the raiment upon thee, and give thee shoes to thy feet.
But in naughty deeds art thou learned, and thou wilt not deem it meet
To labour afield; but art fainer of begging about the land,
Till for thy maw insatiate some meat may come to hand."

But Odysseus of many a rede, he spake and answered again:
"Eurymachus, might there but happen a strife betwixt us twain,
On some hour of the season of spring when the days are waxing long,
In the grass maybe, and I holding a scythe well-curved and strong,
And thou with such another, that we twain the work might try,
Both fasting right unto even, and good store of grass thereby.
Or if 'twere the driving of oxen, the very best ye may,
Both mighty beasts and sleek-skinned, and stuffed with plenteous hay,
Of like age and like burdened, and tireless beasts afield,
And there were the close four-acred, and the clod to the ploughshare to yield;
Then see if aught I fail me straight furrows still to drive!

And again, if the Son of Cronos the war-play smite alive,
Then if I have a buckler, and two spears of war I get,
And therewith a helm all brazen upon my temples set,
Then shalt thou see me blended in the forefront of the play,
Nor yet upon my belly thy mocking words shalt thou lay.
Now thou mockest me out of measure, and hard is the heart in thee,
And thou deemest thyself a great one, and stark thou seemest to be,
Because with but few thou consortest, and they but a worthless band.
Ah! were but Odysseus hither, come aback to his fatherland,
Then verily these doorways, for as broad as they be indeed,
As ye flee through the porch and outdoors, shall be narrow for your need."

So he said: but Eurymachus, thereat did the wrath in his heart awake,
And, from his knit brow scowling, a winged word he spake:
"O wretch! I will do thee a mischief, whereas thou thus hast said
Bold words amidst a many; nor hath thine heart a dread.
Yea, either wine now holdeth thy wit, or else maybe
E'en such it is at all times and thou babblest emptily.
Art thou mad for the beating of Irus, the gangrel of the town?"

So he spake, and caught up a footstool; but Odysseus sat him adown
Beside Amphinomus' knees, the lord of Dulichium's land,
For Eurymachus he dreaded; who smote on the right hand
The cup-swain, and loud clanging to earth down fell the bowl,
And the man himself fell groaning and aback in the dust did roll.
Then through the shadowy feast-hall the Wooers raised the cry,
And thus would one be saying to him that sat next by:

"Would God that the gangrel stranger had perished otherwhere
Ere hither he came, since he raiseth so great a turmoil here!
For now we strive about beggars, nor any joy do we hail

Of the goodly feast and the banquet, and the worser doth prevail."

But unto them fell speaking Telemachus' holy might:
"Fair sirs, ye are mad, and no longer in your hearts do ye carry aright
Your meat and your drink; meseemeth some God your mood doth stir.
But now unto your slumber, since well ye have feasted here,
Go home whenso ye will it, for no man I drive away."

So he spake, and they bit their lips, and in wonder there were they
At Telemachus and his speaking, and his heart of hardihead.
But Amphinomus spake among them, and in suchwise words he said,
He, the glorious son of Nisus, Aretias' son, the King:

"O friends, when one amongst us has said a righteous thing,
With hard words none should mate him, nor rage against him then.
No longer mock the stranger, nor any of the men
Of the house of Odysseus the godlike, house-carles or thralls of war.
Come now, and let the wine-swain go round the cups once more,
That, having poured drink-offering, we may get us home to bed.
And the stranger, let us leave him here in Odysseus' stead
For Telemachus to cherish, since he came to his house the kind."

So he spake, and the words of his speaking seemed good unto their mind,
And Mulius then, the hero, for them the wine-bowl blent,
Who as squire of Amphinomus and Dulichian henchman went;
So in turn to all he dealt it, and they made drink-offering meet
To the Happy Gods, and were drinking the wine the honey-sweet;
But when they had poured and had drunken as their hearts' desire bade,
Then home to his house went each man in slumber and sleep to be laid.

BOOK XIX.

ARGUMENT.

ODYSSEUS AND TELEMACHUS BEAR OFF THE WEAPONS FROM THE HALL, AND LAY THEM IN THE TREASURY. ODYSSEUS SPEAKETH WITH PENELOPE, AND WITH EURYCLEA THE NURSE, WHO, BATHING HIS FEET, KNOWETH HIM BY THE SCAR OF THE ANCIENT HURT THAT HE GAT IN THE HUNTING OF THE BOAR.

THERE then the goodly Odysseus was left to abide in the hall,
Still pondering bane for the Wooers with Athene's help to befall,
And unto Telemachus straightly a wingèd word did he say:
"Telemachus, now withinward all the war-gear must thou lay,
But give soft words to the Wooers when they come the same to miss
And thereof ask thee closely: such words shalt thou speak as this: [more
'From out of the smoke have I laid them; for nought such are they any
As Odysseus left behind him when he sailed for the Troy-folks' shore,
But are worsened where the edges the breath of the fire might find.
And another thing yet greater hath God put into my mind,
Lest ye, when ye are drunken, to strife of strokes may fall
And hurt you; thus befouling the feast and the Wooing withal.
For e'en of himself the Iron to battle draweth men.'"

So he spake; and his father belovèd Telemachus heeded as then,
And he called to Euryclea, and spake to his nurse of old:
'Good dame, within the chamber the women do thou hold
While my father's lovely weapons in the treasure-house I stow, [now.
Which have lain in the house unheeded, and are marred by the fire-reek

For far aloof was my father and I but a child at home ;
But now would I lay them together where the fire's breath may not come."

Then the loved nurse Euryclea this word to him did speed :
"O child, and might'st thou do it to take on thee good heed,
And keep the house with wisdom and ward well all the gear !
But say who wendeth him with thee the brands for thee to bear,
Since the maids may not go before thee a light for thee to make ?"

But Telemachus the heedful made answer thus and spake :
"This guest : for I will not suffer that any have his hand
In my meal-ark, and be deedless, though he come from a far-off land."

So he spake, and the word of his speaking unwinged with her did dwell,
And she shut the door of the chambers that were builded fair and well.
And then fell to Odysseus and his well-renownèd son,
And bore out the helms of battle, and the shields with bosses done,
And the keen spears ; and before them Pallas Athene went,
Holding a golden lantern, and a fair light from it sent.
Then Telemachus fell a-speaking to his father presently :

"O father ! lo a marvel that mine eyes behold and see,
For lo how the walls of the chambers, and the panels fashioned fair,
And the rafters of the pine-tree, and the shafts that all uprear,
All shine unto mine eyesight as if with the fire ablaze !
Ah, some God is within of the dwellers of the wide-spread heavenly place."

But Odysseus of many a rede he spake and answered again :
"Nay, hold thy peace, and refrain thee, and thy mind and thine asking [refrain,
For this is the wont of the God-folk that hold Olympus high.
So go thou and lie thee adown, while I abide hereby,

That yet again thy mother and the handmaids I may stir,
That about all things she shall ask me for the grief that is in her."

So he spake, and Telemachus wended his ways adown the hall,
And 'neath the blaze of the firebrands he gat to his chamber withal,
Where aforetime would he lay him when sweet sleep came his road;
There yet again he laid him, and the holy Dawn abode.
But there the goodly Odysseus was left to abide in the hall,
Still pondering the doom of the Wooers, with Athene's help to befall.

And now from out her chamber came all-wise Penelope,
And like Aphrodite the golden, and Artemis was she,
And they set her a bench by the fire, and she sat her down thereon,
Of turned ivory and of silver all by a craftsman done,
Icmalius hight; and a footstool for the feet beneath had he made
That grew unjointed from out it, and thereon a great fleece was there laid.
So Penelope the all-wise sat down upon that same,
And from out the hall the damsels white-armed about her came;
And they therefrom much bread, and the boards had borne away,
And the beakers wherefrom had drunken those men o'er-haughty that day;
And they cast down the fire from the braziers, and thereon laid withal
New-quickened brands in plenty for light and heat to the hall.

But now again Melantho Odysseus fell to chide:
"Through the night season, O Stranger, will thy troubling yet abide?
About the house wilt thou loiter eyeing the women o'er? [before;
Out, wretch! out a-doors, and there hug thee on the feast thou hast had
Or smitten by the firebrand thy way out shalt thou take!"

Then, from his bent brows scowling, guileful Odysseus spake:
"Yea, wench! and why fallest thou on me with thy wrath and evil will?

Is it because I am foul, and my body clad but ill?
And because through the land I go begging? Well, hard need driveth me,
And such forsooth all beggars and gangrel men must be.
And I—I once was wealthy, and midst of men did live
In a fair rich house; and to bedesmen a many did I give
Whatso they were, and whatso was the need that brought them there.
And thralls had I out of number, and all the goods and gear
Whereby men live in plenty, and for great and rich men pass.
But the Son of Cronos drained me all dry; for his will it was.
So look thou to it, O woman, lest thy fairness thou should'st lose
Wherein thou so excellest all the handmaids of the house;
Lest thy mistress have thee in anger, and her wrath lie hard on thee,
Or Odysseus return, whereof yet a grain of hope there may be.
Moreover, if he hath perished, and his homefare be but dead,
Yet by the will of Apollo a like son stands in his stead,
Telemachus: and of the women of the house that the wanton play
Shall none escape him henceforth: for ripe is his age today."

But Penelope the all-wise the thing he spake she heard,
And she spake unto the handmaid and said a chiding word:
"Thou shameless dog! thou bold-face! from me thou hid'st not away,
Thou and the deed that thou doest: but thine head therefore shall pay.
And now full well thou wottest, since the word thou heard'st me speak,
That in these halls of my dwelling of the stranger would I seek
Some tidings of my husband, since grief besetteth me sore."

To Eurynome the house-dame therewith she spake once more:
"Eurynome, bring thou the settle, and thereover cast a fell,
That thereon the guest a-sitting the tale to me may tell,
And hear my word: for his tidings I would search out thoroughly."

So right handily she brought it and set it down thereby,
The well-smoothed settle, and on it the fleecy fell she cast,
And the goodly toil-stout Odysseus sat down thereon at last,
And Penelope the all-wise took up the word and spake:

"Now of the speech, O Stranger, beginning will I make,
And ask of what men thou comest, whence thy city and thy kin?"

But answered the wise Odysseus and thuswise did begin:
"O Queen, no man of mortals upon the boundless earth
May blame thee: for unto the heavens goeth up the fame of thy worth,
As of some king most noble; and the Gods is he worshipping,
As he rules o'er a folk that is many, and of valiant men is king;
And good manners there he upholdeth, and the black earth yields increase,
Both of the wheat and the barley, and heavy with fruit are the trees;
And the ewes bring forth and fail not, and fish the sea-flood gives.
All this from his well-ruling; for the folk beneath him thrives.
In this thine house then ask me of any other thing,
But of my land and my people nought be thou questioning,
Nor flood my heart with sorrow by very memory.
For I am a man of mourning: nor is it meet for me
Bewailing me and moaning in another's house to sit;
And ill it is to be grieving and make no end to it.
Lest one of the home-folk blame me, or e'en by thee it be said
That I in tears am swimming, my wit with wine o'erlaid."

But unto him then answered heart-wise Penelope:
"O guest, my form and my fairness and the worth that was in me
The Deathless slew when for Troy-town the Argives went aboard,
And in their fellowship wended Odysseus, once my lord.
Ah! would he but be coming, and rule o'er my livelihood,

Then greater were my glory, and my days more fair and good.
Now woe is me for the onrush of ills that the God hath sent!
For all that in these islands are kings and excellent,
In Dulichium, or Samé, or Zacynthus of the trees,
Or abide in the Ithacan country clear-seen across the seas,
All these do woo me unwilling, and my house they waste and wear.
Therefore I heed no guest-folk nor of bedesmen have a care,
Nor any whit of the henchmen who the people's craftsmen be.
But in sorrow for Odysseus melts out the heart in me,
While they press on the wedding, and by cunning ways I wind.
But the first thing that God gave me, and set within my mind,
Was to gear a great loom, and be weaving a web within the hall,
Full fine and wide of measure; and I spake unto them all:

"'O Wooers of mine, O younglings, since the goodly Odysseus is dead,
Stay the urging on of my wedding till this web to an end I have sped,
Lest all for nought its warp-threads on mine hands should wane away.
'Tis a shroud for the hero Laertes, for the season and the day
When the doom of death shall take him that layeth men along;
Lest some one of Achæan women on me should lay the wrong.
Lo the man of great possessions now shroudless is he laid.'

"So I spake, and the men high-hearted my bidding they obeyed,
And through the day my weaving in the mighty loom I plied.
And undid my web in the night when the torches were set by my side;
So for three years I beguiled them, and the Achæans did I tame.
But when it now was the fourth year, and around the seasons came,
And time, through the waning of months and the days' fulfilling must speed,
Then by the means of the handmaids and the wantons lacking heed
They came upon me and caught me, and loud they chided me,
And perforce my work must I finish for as loth as I might be.

"Now no more may I flee the wedding, and other device have I none,
And unto the wedding my parents now urge me, and my son
Is troubled now he noteth how his livelihood they eat;
For to manhood now is he waxen, and a man of all most meet
To heed the house; and Zeus giveth to him a glorious part.
So now withal I bid thee tell thy folk from whence thou art,
Since from no oak old in story and from no stone art thou."

But unto her in answer speaketh wise Odysseus now:
"O worshipped wife of Odysseus that was Laertes' son,
In asking of my kindred wilt thou no more be done?
Well, the tale then will I tell thee, though ye give me into the hand
Of more griefs than e'en now hold me. For still, when aloof from his land
Hath one been such a while as I have, e'en thus will the matter go,
When he hath strayed through the cities of menfolk bearing his woe.
But even so will I tell thee what thou seekest and askest of me.
Now Crete is a certain country amidst of the wine-dark sea,
Fair, fat-soiled, sea-begirded; and a many men are there,
Yea, more than may be numbered; and ninety cities fair
There mingle men's tongues that are divers: there Achæans talk and tell,
And the high-heart Eteo-Cretans, and there Cydonians dwell,
And the Dorian folk three-folded, and Pelasgian folk God-bred.
And Cnosus the great city they have, in which same stead
From nine years old ruled Minos, who great Zeus for a speech-friend won,
The father of my father, high-souled Deucalion.
So Deucalion begat me and Idomeneus the King,
Who, in the beaked ship sailing to Ilios wayfaring,
Went with the sons of Atreus: while I, the younger of birth,
Am Æthon hight: but the elder is he, and the better of worth.
Now there I saw Odysseus, and the guest-gifts to him gave,
Since him for Troy-town making to Crete the strong wind drave;

For seaward from Malea it thrust him straying then,
And bound him in Amnisus, where is Eleithyias' den,
A haven strait, where hardly by the storm he failed to be caught.
So, coming unto the city, Idomeneus he sought,
For he said that he was his guest-friend, and a dear and honoured one.
But he for ten days at the least, or eleven days, was gone,
In his beaked ship unto Ilios wayfaring over the sea.
So I brought the man to my house, and guested him well with me,
And heedfully him did I cherish, for my house held many a thing.
And unto those his fellows who that man were following
Red wine and the flour of barley from the folk-store I gathered and gave,
And oxen for burnt-offering, that enow their souls might have.

"So twelve days the holy Achæans abided there in the land;
For stark drave the north wind on them that hardly might they stand,
And some God that was hard to deal with the storm-rush 'gainst them made,
But the thirteenth day the wind fell, and thereupon they weighed."

Then he stayed his feignèd story, that like to the truth did he tell,
And the flesh of her was molten, and the tears as she hearkened fell;
And e'en as the snow is molten on the mountain peaks on a day,
And that which the west wind sheddeth the east wind wasteth away,
And the streams of the river are swollen by that melting off the hill,
So were her fair cheeks molten, and there she wept her fill;
And sore she bewailed her husband who beside her sat in the life.

Great pity then had Odysseus in his heart of his weeping wife,
But his eyes beneath his eyelids like horn or steel they stood
Untrembling, and he refrained him of the tears by his craftihood.
But when of her tearful wailing she was satiate at the last
Therewith again she answered, and this word to him she cast:

"Now guest, and thou guest indeed, yet thy tale I think to try;
If indeed thou there hast guested with his godlike company,
My husband in thy feast-hall, as the tale to me ye bore,
Then tell me what like was the raiment that about his body he wore,
And what was the man to look on, and his fellows, what were they?"

But Odysseus of many a counsel he fell to answer and say:
"Tis hard to tell, O woman, so long as the time doth wear;
For now indeed already hath come the twentieth year
Since the day when he departed and left my land behind.
Yet forsooth e'en so will I tell thee as the image abides in my mind.
For a well-fulled cloak of purple the goodly Odysseus wore,
Twofold; and therewith a buckle of goldsmith's work it bore
With double clasps for the tongue, and its face with wise-work wrought.
For thereon a hound in his forepaws a spotted hind had caught,
And glared upon it gasping: and all men marvelled there
At those things of gold; how he still glared on as he throttled the deer,
And how with her feet she was writhing, so sore as she longed to go free.
Now withal a gleaming kirtle on his body did I see;
As the peel that showeth outward of a thin-layered onion,
E'en so dainty was its fashion, and it shimmered as the sun,
And many women beheld it, and wondered at it sore.
And now a thing will I tell thee for thine heart to ponder o'er,
If Odysseus this weed did on him at home I nothing wot,
Or if on the ship swift-fleeting the gift of a fellow he got,
Or mayhappen of a guest-friend; for to many men was he dear,
And amidst of all the Achæans scarce might he find his peer.
But a brazen sword I gave him, and a cloak twofold and fine,
Of purple dye and lovely, and a long-skirt gaberdine,
And I brought him with all honour to his well-benched ship on the sea.

"Now there went with him an henchman, but a little older than he,
Of whom I will tell thee the fashion as truly as I can:
A black-skinned man, round-shouldered, a curly-headed man;
Eurybates his name was, and over every wight
Odysseus held him in honour, for he knew what was meet and right."

So he spake, and yet more was he stirring the longing of her woe,
As she knew the soothfast tokens that Odysseus there did show.
But when of her tearful mourning she was satiate at the last
Therewith she fell to answer, and this word to him she passed:

"Now from henceforth, O Stranger, though erst thou wert piteous,
Shalt thou be dear and honoured in the chambers of my house.
For 'twas I that dight him the raiment whereof e'en now ye told,
And I folded it up from this chamber, and did on it the buckle of gold;
Yea, e'en for his adornment. But now ne'er will he come to mine hand!
Nay never more come homeward to his lovely fatherland!
O baleful doom of Odysseus in the hollow ship to sail,
And make for the evil Ilios and the unnamed Burg of Bale!"

To her then spake in answer Odysseus of many a rede:
"O worshipped wife of Odysseus that was Laertes' seed,
Mar thy fair flesh no longer, nor waste thy soul away
In wailing for thine husband. Though no blame on thee I lay;
For thus often a woman bewaileth her lawful husband gone,
For whom she hath borne the children of their blended loving won,
Were he worser than Odysseus, whom men call the Godhead's peer.
Yet stay thy grief and be heeding the word that of me thou shalt hear;
For in good sooth shall I tell thee, nor cover up the word
Which of Odysseus' homefare a while ago I heard;
How that he is alive and near by in the rich Thesprotian land,

And goodly and great is the treasure that as now he bringeth to hand,
By seeking of gifts 'mid the people: but his trusty folk they died,
And his hollow ship was broken amid the wine-dark tide,
As he came from the Three-horned Island; for wroth were Zeus and the Sun
With him, because his fellows the kine to death had done.
So all they perished together 'mid the clashing billows' roar.
But him to the keel a-clinging the waves cast up ashore
On the land of the Phæacians, men unto the Gods akin;
From whom to his heart's desire as a God did he worship win;
And a many things they gave him, and were fain to ferry him home
All scathless; and long ago had Odysseus hither come:
But it seemed to his soul more gainful to wander wide o'er the land,
And goods and gear to gather, e'en such as might come to hand;
Since beyond all men that are death-doomed Odysseus wotteth the lore
Of waxing wealth, and no man may match him evermore.
Such tale I had of Phidon, of Thesprotian men the king,
Who swore the same in his house as he poured the drink-offering,
That the ship was shoved down to the sea, and the shipmen ready there
Who were bidden to flit Odysseus to his fatherland the dear.
But he sent me away before him, for a keel happed there, that was bound
From the folk of the Thesprotians to Dulichium's wheat-rich ground.
And there moreover he showed me Odysseus' gathered store,
That would feed to his tenth generation of men, yea even more;
In the chamber of King Phidon lay such abundant gear.
But Odysseus they said had wended to Dodona, to hearken and hear
The word and the counsel of Zeus from the oak of the lofty crest,
In what wise his home-faring to his land belovèd were best,
(Whence so long aloof he had bided) or by stealth, or openly.

"Thus then the man is scathless, and e'en now is close hereby,
Nor long aloof shall be biding from his friends and his fatherland.

And forsooth an oath hereover will I swear thee out of hand.
And first: thou, Zeus, bear witness, of all Gods the highest and best,
And thou, hearth of the blameless Odysseus, whereto I am come for my rest,
That this very tale I am telling shall be accomplished and done,
And hither shall come Odysseus in this same year of the sun,
Yea, ere this same moon's waning and the next moon's waxing be."

She then in words bespake him, all-wise Penelope:
"O guest, this thing that thou tellest, may it be but even so!
Then verily of my kindness and my many gifts shouldst thou know,
And whosoever meets thee shall deem thee blest indeed.
And yet my mind forebodeth in what wise this shall speed:
Odysseus shall never come home, and no furtherance gettest thou;
For nowise like are the masters within our house as now
To Odysseus amidst of the menfolk—if ever he were indeed— [need.
For the aiding of guests bepitied, and for taking them home in their
Now wash ye this man, O handmaids, and the slumber for him dight,
The bedstead and the blankets and the rugs the dainty-bright,
That he with warmth well cherished the Gold-throned Dawn may meet.
And betimes on the morrow bathe him, and sleek him soft and sweet,
That by Telemachus sitting in the feast-hall at his ease
He may have a care of his victuals: but whosoever of these
Shall grieve him in their anger shall fare the worse therefor;
And his errand here shall be bootless for all his wrath be sore.
For how shalt thou know it, O Stranger, whereby of womankind
I am excellent of counsel, and of understanding mind,
If all weather-worn and ill-clad in our hall thou sittest at meat?

"Short-lived forsooth are menfolk and swift their day to fleet,
And he who is hard-hearted and learned in cruelty,
All men pray evil on him while living he may be,

And dead he hath all men's mocking that erst alive he earned.
But he who liveth upright, and righteousness hath learned,
Far and wide amidst all menfolk goes the glory of his name,
Borne by guests; and many people tell the goodness of his fame."

But to her then spake and answered Odysseus of many a rede:
"Beworshipped wife of Odysseus, the old Laertes' seed,
But loathly to me are these mantles, and these blankets fine and meet,
Since the day when I departed from the snowy fells of Crete,
Across the sea a-faring in the long-ship of the oar:
I will lie as in sleepless night-tides I have rested oft before,
For many a night have I streaked me in full unseemly lair,
And abidden the holy morning, the Gold-throned Dawn and fair.
And moreover, this foot-washing to my mind is nothing meet,
Nor shall any of your women set hand unto my feet,
Of those in the house about thee that are serving in the place,
But it were some woman ancient, of prudent wont and ways,
Whose heart hath borne such troubles as I have had to bear:
To her I should not begrudge it that my feet she handled here."

But to him thus spake in answer heart-wise Penelope:
"Dear guest, no man aforetime hath come to my house and me
Of all far-coming strangers so heedful and so dear,
So heedfully and wisely ye speak of matters here.
Such a goodwife I have, in whose heart do wholesome counsels dwell,
Who erst that man unhappy did rear and nourish well,
And in her hands she took him when his mother brought him to light;
And she thy feet shall wash thee, though now she be minished of might.
—Ho, Euryclea, thou wiseheart! rise up, rise up to me,
To wash one of like age to thy master! Ah, now it well may be
That suchlike are the feet of Odysseus, and suchlike his hands indeed

For mortal men age swiftly amidst of baleful need."

So she spake; but the ancient woman warm tears adown she shed,
And her face with her hands she covered, and a weary word she said:
"Woe's me, O child! I am redeless for thee whom much, and far more
Than all men, Zeus now hateth: and such godlike mind as ye bore!
And although no man of mortals unto Zeus the Thunder-fain
Burned ever thighs so many, or of hundred-folded gain
Of choice gifts gave as thou gavest, when thou wouldst speed the prayer
To come unto eld soft-faring, and thy noble son to rear.
But now from thee hath he taken thine hope and thine home-faring day.
And on him too meseemeth their mocks shall the women lay,
The mocks of the far-come stranger when he entereth houses fair,
As on thee, guest, all these bitches lay the mocking and the jeer;
So to shun their taunts and much mocking as now thou wilt not away
With their washing; but now upon me, nought loth, the bidding doth lay
The Daughter of Icarius, heart-wise Penelope.
And so for Penelope's sake will I wash thy feet for thee,
And for thine own moreover: for my heart is inly stirred
With thy griefs. But withal do thou hearken and lay to heart this word,
For hither have come a many of guests with grief foredone,
But never beheld I another so like to look upon
As thou unto Odysseus of body, of voice, and of feet."

Then answered and spake Odysseus, the rich in counsels meet:
"Yea, carline, and thus say all men, who look on us with eyes,
That we twain are alike to each other in every manner of wise,
As thou of thine understanding dost e'en now say aright."

So he spake; but the ancient woman took the bath-vat shining bright
For the washing of feet, and cold water a plenty therein did she pour,

And therewith the warm she mingled, and down by the hearth of the floor
Sat Odysseus; but now to the shadow he turned, for a thought in his mind
Foreboded, that when she should handle his body the scar she should find,
And that all the deed he was doing should be manifest today.

So she drew nigh her master to wash him, and knew the scar straightway,
E'en the wound that the wood-boar furrowed with his white tooth on the tide
When he to Autolycus fared, and his sons, by Parnassus' side;
The famed father of his mother, who in thievish sleight, and the shift
Of oaths did outgo all men; and he had it of Hermes' gift,
Unto whom he made burnt-offering, well-liked, of many a thigh
Of lambs and of kids, and the God was fain to help him thereby.

Now Autolycus, coming his ways to Ithaca's fat-fed land,
Happed there on the son of his daughter, on earth new-come to hand,
And this child, Euryclea laid it upon his kindly knees,
As he rested after his supper, and spake out words like these:

"Autolycus, some name find thou to lay on the manchild fair,
The child of thy daughter belovèd, the child of many a prayer."

Her then Autolycus answered, and thus the word he said:
"O son-in-law and daughter on him let my word be laid,
Whereas I am hither, laden with the wrath of many a mood,
Of men and women dwelling on earth the wealthy of food,
So let him be called Odysseus, and have the Wrath-child's name.
But when, waxen a man, he cometh to his mother's house of fame,
When he cometh to me to Parnassus, where my wealth in store I lay,
Thereof a gift will I give him and will send him glad on his way."

So there where the gifts abode him came Odysseus to that house,

And therein Autolycus took him, and the sons of Autolycus,
With the hands they gave him welcome, and with soft sweet words of the tongue.
And the mother of his mother about Odysseus clung,
And therewith on his head she kissed him and on both his lovely eyes.
And Autolycus fell to calling on his glorious sons to arise,
And dight the feast; and they hearkened the bidding that he gave,
And a neat of five years old, a bull, thereto did they have,
And flayed him withal and dight him, and the carcase, they jointed it,
And in gobbets clave it deftly, and set it on many a spit,
And roasted it very wisely, and dealt out the shares each one.
So there daylong they feasted till the going down of the sun,
Nor was there a soul of them lacking of one equal feast and the same.
But when the sun sank under, and the dusk and the darkness came,
There then they fell to slumber, and the gift of sleep took they.
But when shone the Mother of Morning, Rose-fingered Early Day,
Forth then they fared to the hunting, both the hounds and Autolycus' sons,
And the goodly Odysseus moreover went with those other ones.
To the steep fells then they betook them, Parnassus' wood-crowned hills,
And speedily were they gotten aloft to the windy ghylls,
Whenas the sun new risen smote the acres of the earth,
Risen up from the soft-flowing river, the deep-streamed Ocean-girth.

So unto a glade came the prickers, and following up the scent
Were the hounds before them going, and at heel of them there went
Autolycus' sons, and Odysseus the valiant went along
Close up to the hounds, and brandished a long-boled spear and strong.

Now there lay a mighty wood-boar, in a thicket so close grown
That not e'en by the might of the storm-wind was the wet blast through it blown,
Nor did the sun bright-shining smite through it with his ray,
Nor the rain-drift pass amidst it, close grown up every way.

And great store of sear leaves ever lay fallen upon its ground.

Now the din of dogs and the tramping of men's feet girt it around
As the hunt came driving against him, and out from his thicket lair
He faced them, his crest a-bristling, and his eyes, as the fire they were,
And he stood at bay anigh them: then Odysseus first of the band
Rushed on, his spear long-shafted upraised in his mighty hand,
All eager for his hurting; but the boar forewent him and drave
A gash above his knee-bone, and much flesh with his tooth he clave
As he charged him athwart; but the bone of the man he touched not it.
But a stroke Odysseus smote him, and his right shoulder he hit,
And straightway through and through him came the spear-shaft's glittering [head,
And he fell in the dust a-grunting, and forth his spirit fled.

Then the kindly Autolycus' children the boar they dighted there,
And the hurt of the goodly Odysseus, the valiant godhead's peer,
Deftly they bound, and they staunched the blood with the staunching-song,
And unto the house of their father they speedily brought him along.

Him Autolycus thereafter, and the sons of Autolycus,
Having healed him well and given him gifts great and glorious,
Did truly and kindly speed him with gifts on either hand
To Ithaca, where his father and high mother to his land
Returning gave him welcome, and asked him of each deed,
And the hurt that he had gotten; and the tale to them did he speed,
How a-hunting of the wood-boar, his white tooth tore him thus,
As unto Parnassus he wended with the sons of Autolycus.

But now as the old wife took him, and with flat hand stroked him withal,
She handled the scar and knew it, and let the limb down fall,
And it came adown on the bath-vat, that with a clanging sound

Upon its side turned over, and the water spilled on the ground;
Then joy and sorrow mingled caught her heart, tears filled her eyes,
And choked was her fulness of voice, and scarce might utterance arise:
But she touched the chin of Odysseus, and spake as her voice she got:

"O thou art Odysseus!—dear child, and I, I knew thee not
Until all over my master these hands of mine had passed!"

And unto Penelope therewith a glance of her eyes she cast,
Full fain that she should be wotting that her lord was there in the place.
But she had no might to behold him, and to look and heed his face,
For her mind thence turned Athene. But Odysseus groped about
With his hands, and so with his right hand he caught the nurse by the throat,
And with the other drew her yet nigher him and said:

"Ah, nurse, wouldst thou destroy me? and thou, when me thou hast fed
On thy very breast! Yea, 'tis I, that with many a grief to bear,
Have come back to the land of my fathers at last in the twentieth year.
But now since thou hast known me, and some God thy soul hath taught,
Keep silence, lest to some other of the house the knowledge be brought;
For one thing now I tell thee, and fulfilled shall be the same:
If these high-hearted Wooers the God 'neath me shall tame,
For all that I was thy suckling from thee will I not refrain
When the other serving-women by me in the house are slain."

But the heart-wise Euryclea, she answered him and said:
"O me, my child! what a word from the hedge of thy teeth hath sped!
Thou knowest my will, how steadfast, how little I use to bend;
I will hold me hard as the iron or some stark stone to the end.
But now a thing will I tell thee; in thine heart do thou ponder it well,
If some God these high-heart Wooers beneath thine hand shall quell,

Of the women here in the hall will I give the tale to thee,
And tell thee whichso shame thee, and whichso sackless be."

But to her then spake and answered Odysseus of many a rede :
" Nay, why shouldst thou tell me, goodwife? hereof is nought of need.
Nay, each myself will I mark her, and will know how each doth live :
Hold but thy peace of speaking, and the rest to the Gods do thou give."

So he spake, and therewith the carline through the feast-hall went adown
To fetch the foot-washing water, for the first to the earth was thrown ;
But when she had washed him and sleeked him with olive oil all o'er,
Then Odysseus drew the settle anigh to the fire once more,
To warm him, and hid the scar with his rags that it should not be seen

But Penelope spake amidst them, and thus said the all-wise Queen :
" O guest, yet a little longer will I ask thee in speech to abide,
For soon shall be the season of the happy slumber-tide
For him whom the sweet sleep taketh, though grieved at heart he be ;
But a sorrow without measure hath the God ordained for me.
Daylong indeed I delight me with the wailing of my woe ;
As my work and the women's o'erseeing, about the house I go :
But when at last night cometh, and Sleep taketh hold of all,
Then I lie on my bed, and thick thronging the sorrows on me fall,
And bitter-sharp and ceaseless stir up my heart to wail ;
As when the Pandareus' daughter, the fallow nightingale,
Singeth exceeding sweetly in the new-come Spring's increase,
Amid the close leaves sitting, and the covert of the trees ;
And many a trill she turneth, and her full voice doth she pour
As that Itylus she bewaileth, her loved son, whom of yore
With the brass she slew unwitting, e'en the son of Zethus the King.
So twowise hither and thither my soul goes wavering,

Whether here by my son abiding I shall guard all steadfastly,
My treasure, and my handmaids, and my great house roofed on high,
And worship the bed of my husband, and the fame of the folk and their [word,
Or shall follow some one of Achæans, whoso is the worthiest lord,
And wooeth me here in the halls with wooing gifts measureless great.
And so long as my son was light-minded and nought but a child of estate,
Then I might not wed and be leaving my child and my husband's home;
But now that great he is waxen, and to manhood's measure hath come,
He also in turn craves of me to get me gone from the hall,
Being grieved at the gear a-waning; for the Achæan lords eat all.

"But come now, hearken a dream, and the same unto me arede:
I have twenty geese in the homestead who come up from the water to feed
On the wheat; and me it delighteth to look upon the same.
But lo you, a crook-nebbed eagle adown from the mountain came,
And brake all their necks and slew them, that there on a heap they lay
In the stead, and aloft he flew to the holy lift of the day.
And for me I wept and bewailed me though nought but a dream it were,
And the well-tressed damsels Achæan were gathered about me there,
While sore I wept that the eagle had slaughtered my geese for me.
But aback came the eagle, and now on the jutting eaves sat he,
And spake with the voice of a mortal, and bade me stay my woe:

"'Heart up, Icarius' Daughter, whom all the world doth know!
No dream is this, but a vision most good, and shall come to pass;
For these geese they are the Wooers, and I, the erne that was,
Now as thy very husband to thee have come back home,
And over all the Wooers shall draw a deadly doom.'

"So he spake, and Sleep the soother then let me go, and fled:
And I gazed about, and my geese, I beheld them there in the stead,

The wheat from the trough devouring, and all as it was before."

Then Odysseus of many a rede this answer toward her bore:
"How then may this dream's a-reding be turned another road,
Since the very man, e'en Odysseus himself, to thee hath showed
What wise shall all be accomplished? for manifest and plain
Shows the death for all the Wooers, none shall 'scape the doom of [bane?"
But Penelope the heart-wise unto this answer fell:
"Yet, guest, dreams come to nothing and confusèd tales they tell,
Nor yet doth all their tokening to all men come about.
Lo now, of dreams swift-fleeting! through two gates fare they out,
And one of horn is fashioned, and one of the wood-beast's tooth,
And those through the tooth that wend them to usward, they forsooth
But vainly do beguile us with the promise idly borne;
While they that come unto menfolk by the gate of polished horn
Fulfil their tokening truly to the man who them hath seen:
But not from thence meseemeth hath the way to meward been
Of that wild dream, else welcome to me and my son it were:
But this I tell thee, and hold it in thine heart with heed and care,
That to-morrow cometh name-cursed for the day that shall sunder me
From Odysseus' house: for the contest shall I ordain it to be,
The game of the axes; which that man within our house and hall
Would set up a-row like ship-ribs to the number of twelve in all,
And, standing aloof, a long way, would shoot a shaft right through,
So this contest shall I 'stablish for them that come hither to woo.
For lo you, whoso with his palms the bow shall lightly bend,
And through all twelve of the axes a shaft therefrom shall send,
Him then shall I follow, departing from this house of the wedded wife,
This fair house, so abundant in all that upholdeth life,
Which yet shall I remember, though but in dreams it be.

Then Odysseus many-counselled he answered, and thus spake he:
"O beworshipped wife of Odysseus, that is Laertes' son,
This strife within your homestead delay not; let it be done!
For hither ere that shall Odysseus the many-counselled have come,
Ere these men have handled the bow well polished, or drawn home
The bow-string unto the nocks, or shot the iron through."

Then Penelope the heart-wise in turn made answer thereto:
"O guest, if thou wert willing to sit here in the hall
And pleasure me thus, no slumber on mine eyelids then should fall.
But nowise it availeth that sleepless men should live;
For the Deathless unto menfolk on the cornkind earth do give
Some share of sleep and slumber, yea unto every one:
Now therefore unto my chamber aloft will I be gone,
And in my bed will lay me, which is made but a place of lament,
And with my tears is watered since the day when Odysseus went
To look on evil Ilios, the nameless place of guilt.
There then will I lay me; but thou, lay thee down in this house as thou wilt,
And on the floor do thou streak thee; or a bed for thee let them dight."

So saying, her ways she wended to her bower-aloft the bright;
But not alone, for the handmaids along with her did they fare.
So, going aloft to her chamber with her women thralls, then there
She fell to bewail Odysseus her dear lord, till at last
Sweet slumber over her eyelids Grey-eyed Athene cast.

BOOK XX.

ARGUMENT

HEREIN IS TOLD OF SIGNS AND WONDERS IN AND ABOUT THE HOUSE OF ODYSSEUS.

SO adown in the porch Odysseus the valiant had his bed,
For he strewed him an untanned oxhide, and over that he spread
Many fells of the sheep which the lordlings of Achæans there had slain,
And over him Eurynome spread a cloak when down he was lain.
There then lay Odysseus waking, with his mind on bale intent
For those Wooers; but the women now forth from the feast-hall went,
Who e'en now with the Wooers were mingled, and along with them were laid,
And each to each were they laughing, and game and glee they made.
Moved then was the heart of the man within his breast the dear,
And much in doubt was he swaying in his heart and his spirit there,
Whether falling on he should deal them, to every one, her bane,
Or suffer them to mingle with the masterful Wooers again,
E'en one last time and latest; and growled his inmost heart.
And e'en as a bitch that goeth round her tender whelps to part
The strange man from them, and bays him, and longeth for the strife,
So inly was he growling in grudge at their evil life,
And, smiting his breast, with a speech-word his heart he fell to chide:

"Yet bear it, O heart! things uglier hast thou borne upon a tide;
Yea, on the day when the Cyclops' stark fury ate thy men,
Thy goodly folk; and thou bearedst, till even out of the den [day."
Rede led thee forth, though thou deemedst that thou shouldst die that

So he spake, the soul a-chiding within his breast that lay,
That abode in all obedience steadfast the thing to bear,
But he himself in meanwhile was tossing here and there.
As when a man hath gotten by a great fire blazing out
A paunch of fat and of blood, and turneth it oft about
Hither and thither, all eager to roast it speedily;
So tossed he hither and thither, and ever pondered he
What wise he might have the handling of those Wooers bare of shame,
And he but one among many. Then anigh him Athene came,
Come adown from the lofty heavens, and e'en as a woman was made;
So over his head was she standing, and the word to him she said:

"Why watchest thou and wakest, O man most luckless of life?
In thine own house now thou liest, and within the house is thy wife,
And thy child; such a son as all men would have their son to be."

Then the many-counselled Odysseus thus answered, and said he:
"Yea, all these things, O Goddess, aright dost thou surely say,
But one thing the mind in my breast doth turn about and weigh,
What wise on these shameless Wooers I now may lay my hand,
Being one alone, and they ever are within a gathered band.
And withal a greater matter I ponder earnestly,
In what wise, if I slay them by the will of Zeus and thee,
I myself may come off scathless: now hereof, I prithee, heed."

But the Goddess, the Grey-eyed Athene, thus did her answer speed:
"Hard heart! a man might hearken to a friend e'en sorrier;
Yea if he were but a mortal, nor so wise of counsel were!
But I that am a Goddess, and through all toil and pain
Without fail ever guard thee, one thing I tell thee plain:
If fifty bands of menfolk, word-speaking wights that are,

Stood round about us, eager for our slaying in the war,
Yet their kine shouldst thou be driving and their goodly fatted sheep.
So now let slumber have thee; for 'tis grievous watch to keep,
And wake night-long; and thine evils shalt thou beguile at last."

So she spake, and over his eyelids the sleep and slumber cast,
But back again to Olympus did that Godhead's Glory depart.

But while Sleep, limb-loosener, took him, and let loose the cares of his heart,
His wife, the wont of wisdom, she wakened from her sleep,
And sat up on her bed soft-fashioned and fell therewith to weep.
But when of very weeping all satiate was her mind,
Then to Artemis of all Gods prayed that crown of womankind:

"O Artemis beworshipped, Zeus' daughter, thee I pray,
Cast thy shaft into my bosom and take my soul away,
Now, now! or let the whirlwind before the lapse of days
Catch me up, and bear me, hurried adown the dusky ways,
A waif for the outgate of Ocean that aback on his ways doth flow.
As the storm-wind bare off the daughters of Pandareus long ago,
When the Gods had slain their parents, and orphans in their hall
Were they left, and Aphrodite she nourished them withal
With cheese and with sweet honey, and joyful wine and good;
And Heré gave unto them beyond all womanhood
Fair shape and wit; and stature gave the holy Artemis;
And cunning gave Athene in the craft that goodly is.
But once, while Aphrodite to the long Olympus hied,
To pray for these same damsels a happy wedding-tide
Of Zeus, the Fain-of-the-thunder, since he knoweth utterly
All things that are doomed and undoomed for men on earth that die,
That while the Wights of the Tempest snatched them up there and then,

And gave them over for handmaids to the Wreakers loathed of men;
E'en so may Olympus' dwellers from all eyes cover me,
Or the fair-tressed Artemis smite me while Odysseus yet I see,
Yea, e'en if I needs must wend me beneath the dreadful earth
Rather than be the darling of a man of worser worth.

"But lo you, a bale to be borne with if one shall weep through the day,
And ever in ceaseless sorrow shall wear his life away,
But Slumber holds him a night-tide, for all memory then dieth out,
Both of good and of ill, when his eyelids the slumber covereth about:
But evil dreams unto me sendeth God in the sleeping tide;
Yea, e'en on this very night one like to him lay by my side,
E'en such as he was when he wended with the host; and my heart was glad,
For I thought that a dream no longer, but a vision at last I had had."

So she spake; and even therewith was the Gold-throned Dawning come.
But unto the valiant Odysseus the voice of her wailing went home,
And therewith he fell a-pondering, and it seemed to his mind and his mood
As even now she knew him, and over his bed-head stood.
So he took up the cloak and the fleeces wherein he had slept that tide,
And laid them down on a bench of the hall, but bore out the hide
Without doors; and prayed unto Zeus with hands uplifted on high:

"Zeus Father, if ye have willed it, o'er the wet ways and o'er the dry,
Unto my land to lead me after all that bale of thine,
Let one of those here wakening withinward speak me a sign,
And Zeus himself withoutward show forth a token clear."

So he spake, and Zeus the all-wise gave heed unto his prayer,
And therewithal he thundered from aloft amidst the sky,
From out of Olympus the gleaming; and Odysseus was glad. But hard by

From the house a grinding woman gave forth a sign and a word [herd,
From the place where the mills were standing, the mills of the people's
And thereat twelve thralls of the women would labour yet and again,
For ever milling the barley, and wheat the marrow of men ; [done,
But the others now were sleeping since their grain they had ground and
But the last had not yet given over, for she was the weakest one ; 110
So she stayed her quern and spake out for her master a boding word :

"Zeus Father, of Gods and of menfolk the very King and Lord !
Now mightily thou thunderest aloft from the starry heaven,
And no cloud is about ; so to some one hereby a sign hast thou given.
So do thou for me unhappy e'en after the word that I pray,
And let this day be for the Wooers the last and the latest day,
That they in the halls of Odysseus may hold the feast full fain
Who with heart-wearying labour and the grinding of the grain 118
Have loosened the knees beneath me. So now may they eat their last."

So she spake ; and the valiant Odysseus rejoiced in the words' forecast,
And the thunder of Zeus, and looked to it on those sinners to wreak him
[there.
But now waked the other handmaids in Odysseus' house the fair,
And the flame that never wearies they quickened on the hearth,
And Telemachus rose from his bed, a man like the Gods in worth,
And clad him, and over his shoulders his whetted falchion cast,
And unto his feet the sleek-skinned his sandals fair made fast. [take,
Then a spear strong-shafted, and headed with the whetted brass, did he
And stayed as he went o'er the threshold, and unto Euryclea spake :

"Dear nurse, the guest in our house have ye honoured with victuals and
Or lieth he at haphazard uncared for in the stead ? [bread ?
For such-like is my mother, though prudent she may be, 131

That amidst of men word-speaking, but rashly honoureth she
The worser man, while the better unhonoured she sendeth away."

But Euryclea the heart-wise to him did answer and say: [blame,
"Nay, my child, thou shouldest not blame her when she is nought to
For he sat and drank of the wine while he had goodwill to the same:
And he said that meat he craved not; for thereof she asked him indeed.
But when of sleep and slumber he began to have a heed
Then bade she her handmaidens the bed to strew and dight:
But he as a man fate-baffled, and overworn outright,
Would nought of the beds; nor would he amidst of the blankets sleep,
But on an untanned oxhide and amidst the fells of sheep
He laid him adown in the porch, and a cloak we did o'er him withal."

So she spake: but Telemachus wended his ways from out the hall
With his spear in his hand, and two wood-hounds swift-footed followed his ways,
And he went to the well-greaved Achæans, and the folk in the market-[place.
But Euryclea, daughter of Ops, the son of Pisenor the Lord,
That glory of women, called out, and gave to her handmaids the word:
"Now gather, and some of you hasten to sweep the house all through,
And sprinkle it; and cast ye the carpets purple of hue
O'er the well-wrought high seats: and others wash the tables all about
With the sponges, and the wine-bowls for the blending rinse ye out,
And the double cups well fashioned: and ye others do ye fare
Unto the well for the water, and haste the same to bear.
For not long now will the Wooers be away from the feasting-hall,
But betimes will come back hither: for this is a feast-day for all."

She spake, and they hearkened; and lightly to fulfilling her word they fell.

And a twenty of them hied them to that dark-watered well,
While the others round the houses wrought deftly there and then.
Thither too came the folk of service of those Achæan men,
And the logs cleft well and deftly; and the women's company
Came from the well; and the swineherd to these now drew anigh,
Leading three swine, that the fairest of all his swine-droves were:
These then he left to pasture in the closes trim and fair,
But himself unto Odysseus he spake in gentle wise:

"Guest, do the Achæans behold thee at last with kinder eyes?
Or, as erst they did, do they mock thee about the house and hall?"

But Odysseus of many a rede thus answered and spake withal:
"Ah, may the Gods, Eumæus, avenge me of their scorn,
And these wanton fools, that fashion things nowise to be borne,
In the very house of another! for no whit of shame they have!"

But while in talk together these twain they took and gave,
Melanthius the goatherd unto them drew anear,
A-leading kids, and the flower of all the flock they were,
For the Wooers' feast, and two herdsmen were following on his ways.

So the goats he bound in the forecourt, the echoing pillared place,
And then turned upon Odysseus and spake a bitter taunt:
"So, stranger, still art thou plaguing the house, and there wilt thou haunt,
Pestering the folk, and nowise without doors wilt thou flit?
Betwixt us twain mesemeth will be no end to it
Till we try it with hands; for thou beggest beyond all that is right and fair;
And other feasts of Achæans belike be otherwhere."

So he spake: but all-wise Odysseus he spake no word for his part,

But shook his head in silence, and brooded bale in his heart.
But a third man came up with them, Philœtius leader of men,
And a barren cow and fat goats for the Wooers he had with him then,
And the ferrymen these had fetched over, as others they use to speed
Who may chance to come unto them and of them the ferrying need.
So the beasts he bound up duly in the echoing cloister there,
And fell to asking the swineherd, when he had drawn anear;

"What man is the stranger, O Swineherd, I would have thee tell to me,
New come to our house, and of what men doth he give himself out for to be?
Where is the land of his fathers, and what is his kindred and seed?
Hapless! and yet of his body like a lord and king indeed.
Ah! the Gods drown men wide-wandering in enough of bale and broil,
When even for the king-folk they spin the thread of toil."

Then Odysseus' hand in greeting with his right hand did he take,
And a word he winged unto him, and in such manner spake:
"Hail, father and guest! and henceforward fair fall the luck of thee,
Although of manifold troubles thus holden now ye be!
Zeus Father! none of the Gods is more baleful a God than thou,
For the men whom thou hast begotten thou pitiest nothing now,
And thou minglest them with evil and with woeful misery.
Ah! I brake out a-sweat to behold him, and wept the eyes of me
For the memory of Odysseus; for meseems he too this tide,
Such clouts as this is clad in 'midst menfolk wandering wide,
If anywhere yet he be living and beholding the light of the sun.
But if at last he hath perished, and to Hades' House hath gone,
Woe for great Odysseus! who set me to look to his neat e'en then,
When I was but a lad in the folk-land of the Cephellenian men.
Now numberless are they waxen; nor may any race of neat

Wide-faced fare any better to wax as the ears of wheat.
But them do others bid me for their meat hereto to drive;
Nor heed they aught his man-child within the halls alive,
Nor fear the Gods' a-wreaking: and yearning now are they
To share amidst them the treasure of the King so long away.
Now this the soul within me full oft doth turn about;
For while his son yet bides here 'twere an evil thing, no doubt,
To wend to another folk-land and these beeves with me to drive
Unto alien men. Yet 'tis heavy meseemeth here to live
O'er the kine of others a-sitting, and suffering drearihead:
And long ago to some other of the high-heart kings had I fled
Since things past all endurance come in on us amain;
But my mind of that hapless bethinketh, if yet he may come again
For the scattering of those Wooers about the house of the stead."

Then Odysseus of many a rede thereto made answer and said:
"Neatherd, since like to no evil or witless one thou art,
And I myself am noting the wisdom that toucheth thine heart,
One thing I tell thee, and hereby with a great oath the same do I bind:
Bear witness, Zeus, thou King-god, and thou guest-table kind,
And thou hearth of the glorious Odysseus whereunto I have come!
That e'en while thou abidest shall Odysseus win him home;
And thou thyself shalt see it, if thou hast will to see,
The slaying of the Wooers where now the lords they be."

Thereto then answered the neatherd, the keeper of the kine:
"O guest, may the son of Cronos make good this word of thine,
Then shouldst thou know of my might, and my hands what like they were."

And in like wise did Eumæus to all Gods make his prayer,
That Odysseus of all wisdom might get him home to his stead.

But while each unto the other such words as this they said,
For Telemachus death and the doomday shaped out the Wooers' band.
But unto them in that while came a fowl on the right hand,
An eagle lofty-flying with a faint-heart dove in his clutch:
Then Amphinomus spake amidst them, and the words he said were such:

"Friends, once more nothing cometh of our counsel and our rede
For Telemachus' bane: now rather of the high feast have we heed."

So Amphinomus spake amidst them, and good to all was his word,
And into the house they gat them of Odysseus godlike lord;
And they cast adown their mantles on the thrones and the benches there,
And the mighty sheep they slaughtered, and the fatted goats the fair,
And they slew fat boars moreover, and one of the herded kine,
And they roasted the inwards and shared them; and then they mingled the wine
In the blending bowls, and the swineherd dealt round the beakers then,
And the bread to them was dealing Philœtius, master of men,
In baskets fair, and Melanthius the wine poured out and bare,
And they reached out their hands to the victuals that lay before them there.

But Telemachus, heedful of goodhap, Odysseus set adown
Within the well-built feast-hall upon the threshold of stone,
Having brought him a sorry settle and withal a scanty board;
And he gave him share of the inwards and the wine for him he poured
In a golden cup; and moreover a word he bespake him then:

"Sit there adown and be drinking the wine amidst the men,
And I myself will ward thee from the gibes and the hands of all
These Wooers here; since soothly this no common hall,
But the very house of Odysseus, which he gat for me and my gain.

But ye, ye Wooers, from buffets and chiding your souls refrain,
Lest contention rise amidst us and strife herein be stirred."

So he spake: but they the Wooers, they bit their lips as they heard,
And at Telemachus wondered, so boldly as he spake.
But Antinoüs, son of Eupeithes, thereon the word did take:

"Telemachus' word, Achæans, let us take; for as hard as it is,
Although forsooth against us a very threat is this.
For the Son of Cronos stayed us, or else by us had he been
Well-hushed within the feast-house, for all he speaketh keen."

So Antinoüs spake, but the other no whit his word gainsaid.
But now the hallowed hundreds of the Gods the henchmen led
Through the town, and the long-haired Achæans were gathered 'neath the [roof
Of Apollo's shady thicket, the Shooter far aloof.
Then they roasted, and unspitted the flesh that lieth without,
And a glorious feast they feasted, and dealt the shares about.
And an equal share by Odysseus the swains of service laid,
Like the share to the others allotted, for so indeed he bade,
Telemachus, son belovèd of Odysseus, godhead's peer.

But not wholly Athene suffered the haughty Wooers there
To refrain from mocks heart-grieving, so that yet more grief and need
Might drown the soul of Odysseus, the old Laertes' seed.

Now there was a man of the Wooers, which same Ctesippus hight,
And he had his house in Samé and was wont to all unright,
And he, trusting in his riches, that were great and marvellous,
Was wooing the wife of Odysseus so long away from his house,
So now to the masterful Wooers he fell to speak, and said:

"O noble Wooers, hearken till a word of mine is sped!
This guest for long meseemeth hath had his equal share,
And surely now meseemeth 'tis nothing right nor fair
To maltreat Telemachus' guest-friends who may come to this stead on a day,
So I also will give him a guest-gift, which he may give away
As a guerdon to the bath-maid, or any one else of the thralls
Who dwell hereby, and are haunting godlike Odysseus' halls."

So saying from out of a basket the foot of an ox he took,
And cast with his sturdy hand: but Odysseus shunned the stroke,
His head but lightly swerving; and a bitter laugh and fell
His heart laughed as the ox-foot smote the wall that was builded well,
But Telemachus spake, and straightway with words Ctesippus chid:

"It is well for thy life, Ctesippus, that to thee it thus betid
To miss the guest; for thy bolt he shunned himself, e'en he:
Or else with the whetted spear midmost had I smitten thee,
And thy father before thy wedding should have looked to thy burial.
Therefore let none put forward such shameless deeds in the hall,
For by this time every matter I understand and know,
Both the good and also the worser: and a child was I long ago.
Forsooth there have been doings we have borne to look upon,
The slaying of flocks, and the drinking of wine, and the bread foredone,
Since for one to refrain a many is a thing right hard to do;
So now no longer do me the ill-deeds of the foe.
And yet if at last ye desire to slay me with the brass,
That would I; and far better that my death should come to pass
Than that here I sit beholding such ugly deeds played out:
Guests mauled and mocked, and men haling the women thralls about
In most unseemly fashion through all the chambers fair."

So he spake, and a while the others they sat in silence there,
But at last spake Agelaüs, who was Damastor's son:
"O friends, with him who hath spoken aright there is not one
That with thwart words should chide him or to contest with him fall.
Nought now this guest let us mischieve, nor any man or thrall
That haunteth the house of Odysseus the godlike day by day.
But unto Telemachus now and his mother a word would I say,
A gentle word for the pleasure of the hearts of both the twain:
For even so long as the hope did yet in our hearts remain
That Odysseus of all wisdom should come back to his house of old,
So long, no blame of her biding in the homestead to withhold
The Wooers therein, and refrain them: for better so would it be
If Odysseus compassed his homefare, and home at his house were he.
But now 'tis as clear as it may be that he never returneth again;
So come now, sit by thy mother, and bid her straight and plain
That she wed the best amongst us, and the greatest giver of gear,
That thou thyself rejoicing may'st have thine heritage here,
And eat and drink, and thy mother another's house may heed."

But Telemachus the prudent a word to him did speed:
"Nay, nay, by Zeus, Agelaüs, and by my father's woe,
Who afar from Ithaca wanders, or is dead a while ago,
My mother's wedding I let not, but bid her evermore
To wed with whom she willeth who shall give her gifts good store.
But 'twere shame that her unwilling I should thrust from out the hall
With the hard word: God forbid it that such a thing befall!"

So he spake; but Pallas Athene amidst the Wooers' crew
Awoke undying laughter, and their minds astray she drew;
For now all they were laughing with the jaws of other men,
And flesh bloodstained were they eating, and the eyes of them as then

Were filled with tears, and the thoughts of their souls into sorrow strayed.

Then the godlike Theoclymenus he spake to them and said:
"Why bear ye this bale, ye unhappy? For your heads and your faces out-
And the knees that are beneath you are wrapt about in night, [right
And let loose is the voice of wailing, and wetted with tears are your cheeks,
And blood the hall-walls staineth and the goodly panels streaks;
And the porch is full of man-shapes and fulfilled is the garth of the stead,
As they wend 'neath the dusk and the darkness, and the sun from the heavens is dead;
And lo! how the mist of evil draws up and all about!"

So he spake: but all they on him sweet laughter yet laughed out,
And Eurymachus, Polybus' offspring, then fell to speaking there:
"Now witless is this stranger new come from otherwhere!
So out a doors, ye younglings, do ye lead the man forthright,
That he wend him unto the high-place, since he deemeth us here in the [night."
But the godlike Theoclymenus, thus answering, fell to say:
"Eurymachus, nought I crave thee for speeders on the way.
For verily eyes I lack not, nor ears, nor both my feet,
And the mind in my breast is fashioned in manner nought unmeet.
With these will I get me without doors; for I see the bale coming on
Which no man among you shall flee from, and no man of the Wooers shall shun,
E'en those who about the homestead of godlike Odysseus abide,
And are mocking men, and framing the wickedness of pride."

So saying, his ways he wended from the house fast built and fair,
And came to the house of Piræus, who took him blithely there.

But all the Wooers, beholding each other face to face,
Fell to stirring Telemachus' anger, and to laugh at the guests of the place.
And some one of those masterful younglings e'en thus would be saying
"Telemachus, surely no man hath more evil guests than thou; [now:
E'en such as is this wanderer that guesting here doth lurk,
The bread and the wine a-craving; and hath no skill in the work
Of the field or the fight; but goeth on earth an idle load.
And again here rose this other to foretell us and forebode.
Now if thou would'st but hearken, far gainfuller would it be
To cast these guests together in a many-banked ship of the sea,
To Sicilian men to ship them; whence thy gain were good and due."

E'en such were the words of the Wooers; but he gave no heed thereto,
And in silence looked on his father, abiding the hour of the day
When he on those shameless Wooers his hands at last should lay.

But the Daughter of Icarius, wise-heart Penelope,
As now right over against them her lovely chair set she,
And she hearkened the voice of each one of the men within the hall.
And for them—they arrayed the banquet midst laughter, and withal
Sweet was it and heart-staying, for many a beast had they slain.

But no such an unblessed banquet shall ever be again
As that which the mighty man and the Goddess soon should dight
For those that first had fashioned the deeds of all unright.

BOOK XXI.

ARGUMENT.

HEREIN IS TOLD OF THE TRIAL OF THE BENDING OF THE BOW, AND THE SHOOTING THROUGH THE AXES.

NOW the Grey-eyed, the Goddess Athene, planted a thing to grow
In the heart of Icarius' daughter, Penelope wise to know,
That she bring the Bow to the Wooers, and the grey steel therewithal,
For the birth of strife and murder within Odysseus' hall.
So up the lofty stair of her chamber now she went,
And in her strong hand took she the key that was shapely bent,
And brazen and fair, with a handle thereto of ivory,
And she went with her women of service to the outermost chamber on high,
Wherein there lay together the treasure of the King,
Both gold and brass and iron well wrought in the smithying.
And therein lay the bent-back bow, and the shaft-full quiver lay there,
Wherein were a many arrows the grief and the groan that bear;
Which same were the gift of a friend, godlike, whom while agone
He met in Lacedæmon, e'en Iphitus Eurytus' son;
But it was in the stead of Messene that they came together there,
In Orsilochus' house the war-deft: thither needs must Odysseus fare
To seek him a debt which the people, the whole folk, owed him aright;
Whereas men of Messene had lifted in their ships with the benches dight
Out of Ithaca sheep three hundred, and the herders that with them were.
And so upon that sending the long way did Odysseus fare,
Yet a lad, and his father sent him, and the elders of the men.
But Iphitus sought his horses which he had lost as then,

Twelve brood-mares with their sucklings, toil-patient mules beneath
And they forsooth thereafter were but for his doom and his death ;
When he to the Son of Zeus the man, the strong-souled came,
E'en Heracles, well-proven in mighty deeds of fame,
Who slew him, his guest in his house, and in his hardihead
Feared not the following wrath of the Gods, nor the table he spread
For the guest ; but e'en thereafter the man himself did he slay,
And kept for his own the horses strong-hoofed, nor let them away.

On this quest he fell in with Odysseus, and to him he gave the bow
Which Eurytus the mighty had borne a while ago,
But unto his son he gave it when he died in his lofty hall.
Unto him a keen sword gave Odysseus, and a mighty spear withal,
For the birth of close-knit friendship : but yet they never knew
The tables of each other : for ere that Zeus' offspring slew
That Iphitus Eurytus' son, the Deathless Godfolk's peer,
Who had given the bow to Odysseus : who never the same would bear
On the black ship, when he wended his way to the battle-tide,
But for his dear friend's memory he laid it to abide
In his treasure ; but oft would he bear it as about his lands he passed.

So when that glory of women to her chamber came at last,
She stood on the oaken threshold which erst the wright had made
All smooth by his art and his cunning, and the rule thereto had laid,
And thereto had fitted the door-posts and hung the door-leaves bright.
Therewith the thong of the latch-ring she cast aloose forthright,
And thrust in the key moreover, and shot back the bolts of the door
With an aim that was straight and downright ; and e'en as a bull doth roar
A-feeding in the meadow, the fair doors smit by the key
Roared out so loud, and before her flew open speedily,
And she went on the high-raised flooring whereon the coffers stood,

Wherein there lay the raiment stored up sweet-smelling and good;
And thence she reached her over, and took down the bow from the pin,
And therewith the shining bow-case that the same was lying in.
There then adown she sat her, and the case on her dear knees laid,
And her King's bow thence a-drawing shrill wailing there she made.
But when of tearful wailing she was satiate at the last,
Therewith unto the feast-hall and the haughty Wooers she passed,
And the back-bent bow in her hand and the shaft-full quiver she bore,
Wherein were many arrows laden with groaning sore;
And the handmaids that were with her, a chest were they carrying
Where lay much brass and iron, the war-gear of their King.

But when that glory of women came amidst of the Wooers there,
She stood beside the doorpost of the roof built stout and fair,
Before her face upholding a lap of her delicate hood,
And withal on either side her a trusty handmaid stood;
And straight she spake to the Wooers and said a word to hear:

"Hearken, O high-heart Wooers, this house that waste and wear,
Eating and drinking our substance without a stop or stay,
The wealth of our house-master so long a while away,
And can make no other pretext of the matter ye plan to do
But that ye long to wed me and make me the wife of you.
—Come, Wooers, since the contest and the prize befalleth so,
Here will I lay before you Odysseus' mighty bow,
And whichso of you the easiest with his palms the bow shall bend,
And throughout all twelve of the axes the shaft therefrom shall send,
Him then shall I follow, departing from this house of the wedded wife,
This fair house so abundant in all that upholdeth life;
Which yet shall I remember, though but in dreams it be."

So she spake, and Eumæus the swineherd, the goodly man, bade she
To lay before the Wooers the bow and the iron grey;
And Eumæus took them weeping as adown the gear did he lay:
And otherwhere wept the neatherd when he saw the bow of his lord.
But Antinoüs fell to chiding, and spake and said the word:

"O fools of the field! still pondering on things that endure but a day,
Why drop ye tears, poor wretches, and stir in such a way
The heart of our lady within her? when even as it is
In grief her soul abideth, since her loved mate she doth miss.
Now sit and feast in silence; or out a-doors go ye
To weep your fill, and behind you leave this same bow to be
A contest for the Wooers, and no lightly-heeded thing;
For I deem that the bow well-shaven not lightly one shall string,
Since no such man of prowess midst all these doth abide
As once was that Odysseus: and I saw him once on a tide,
Whereof I yet have memory, when a little child was I."

So he spake, and the heart within him was hoping verily
To stretch the string, and the arrow right through the iron to waft,
While he himself was fated to be first to taste of the shaft
At the hands of the blameless Odysseus, the man he then did shame
As he sat in his halls, still urging his fellows to the same.

But Telemachus' holy might now spake amidst them and said:
"Ah! Zeus the Son of Cronos all witless me hath made!
For my mother beloved is saying, and she the wise of heart,
That she now will follow another and from this our house depart,
While I laugh and in my mind, gone witless, glad am I.
So come ye, ye Wooers, look to it! for set forth is the prize on high.
There is never another such woman in all the Achæan land,

Not in Pylos the holy, or Argos, or there where Mycene doth stand,
Nor in this our Ithacan folkland, or the mainland black of earth;
And ye yourselves ye know it: why praise I my mother's worth?
So draw ye aback for no pretext, nor hold ye long aloof
From this bow-bending, for we too would see it put to the proof;
Yea, I myself will try it, this deed of the bow to do,
If haply I may bend it and shoot the iron through. [mind
Then my mother beworshipped shall leave me, and I with no sorrow of
When she goes from this house with another, and I am left behind;
E'en I, such a man that my father's fair weapons I bear at the last."

So he spake, and his cloak of purple from his shoulders straight he cast
And leapt upright; and his war-sword from his shoulder did he do.
Then first he set up the axes, having digged a long trench straight through
For all the axes to stand in; and by rule set them aright,
And trod in the earth about them, and all wondered at the sight,
How orderly he arrayed them, who the first time saw them now.
Then he went and stood on the threshold, and fell to trying the bow.
Thrice then he made it tremble in his longing the bow to bend;
And thrice he laid by his prowess; though his soul yet longed in the end
To draw the bow-string duly and shoot the iron through:
And now might he have bent it, so strong the fourth time as he drew,
But Odysseus nodded unto him and withheld him, long as he might.
Then Telemachus' holy power amidst them spake outright:

"Out on it! either a dastard unmighty henceforth shall I be,
Or I am o'eryoung to be trusting in the might and the hands of me
To ward off the man who preventeth, or falling on me in the fight.
But come now, ye who of prowess are mightier than my might,
Prove ye the bow amongst us, let an end of the trial be made."

So saying, the bow from off him adown on the ground he laid,
And against the well-joined panel fair-polished the same did he lean,
And by its fair-wrought horn-tip the arrow swift and keen,
And so went and sat him adown on the high seat whence erst he arose.

Then Antinoüs, son of Eupeithes, fell to and spake amidst those:
"Rise up now from the left hand, all ye fair fellows of mine,
From the selfsame place beginning whence beginneth the pouring of wine."

So he spake, and the word of his speaking seemed good to every one.
And first uprose Leiodes; and he was Œnops' son,
And the seer unto the Wooers; and he sat by the goodly bowl
In the innermost nook, at all tides; alone unto his soul
The deeds of shame were hateful, and the Wooers, he blamed them all.

So first the bow he handled, and the sharp shaft therewithal, [would do;
And he went to the threshold and stood there and the deed of the bow
But nowise might he bend it, for it wearied his hands as he drew
That were all unworn and tender: so then to the Wooers he spake:

"O friends, I may not bend it; so the bow let another take.
But many a man of the highest, this bow shall bring to nought
His life and his soul. Yet far better it is unto death to be brought
Than to live and make miss of the thing for which in this house alway
We are gathered here together, expecting day by day.
And now, if any hopeth and his heart longeth eagerly
To wed Odysseus' bed-mate and wed Penelope,
Then, when of the bow he is proven and a sight of the matter hath had,
Let him woo some other woman of Achæans lovely clad,
And seek her with gifts of wooing; and this woman, soon or late,
Let her wed the greatest giver and the man that is sent her by fate."

In such words he bespake them, and from him put the bow,
And leaned it against the panel, well-jointed, smoothed enow,
And against the fair-wrought horn-tip he leant the arrow keen,
And so set him adown on the high-seat wherein he erst had been.

But Antinoüs fell to chide him, and spake the word and said:
"Leiodes, and what a word from the wall of thy teeth hath sped!
A hard word and a grievous that I am wroth to hear.
What! the life and the soul of our highest this bow then shall outwear
Because thou wert not able to bend it by thy might?
Nay, sure thy mother beworshipped ne'er brought thee forth to light
To be a bender of bows, and a man the arrow to wend;
Yet the other high-heart Wooers that bow shall speedily bend."

He spake, and the herder of goats, Melanthius, bade withal:
"Melanthius, hasten and kindle a fire amidst of the hall,
And put a great bench beside it, and fleeces over it spread,
And bring forth the great lard-cake that lieth within the stead,
That we younglings the bow may warm, and with fat anoint it about,
And so try it again, and the contest to its end may carry out."

Then Melanthius speedily quickened the fire unwearied of flame,
And brought up a bench to set by it, and fleeces cast over the same,
And brought forth the great lard-cake that lay the house within;
And the younglings warmed it and tried it; but neither so might they win
To bend the bow, for thereunto much lacking in might they were.
But Antinoüs yet withheld him and Eurymachus, godhead's peer,
The chiefs of the Wooers excelling in might most valorous.

But those twain, they now had wended together out of the house,
The neatherd and the swineherd of Odysseus godhead's peer;

And himself, the goodly Odysseus, came forth to where they were,
And when they were come without doors and were gotten forth of the close
He put forth the sound of his voice, and with kind words spake unto those:

"Neatherd, and thou, O Swineherd, shall I say a word to you,
Or hide it within me? that speaking my spirit biddeth me to.
—What men were ye for the warding of Odysseus, were he come
From anywhere of a sudden, and a God should bring him home?
On that day would ye stand by Odysseus, or the men that are come to woo?
Speak out what the heart and the soul withinward urgeth you!"

Spake the neatherd, he who heeded the herds of the beeves and the kine:
"Zeus Father! now be accomplished this inward hope of mine,
Of this man's home-returning with a very God to lead;
Then should ye wot of my prowess and my hands to do the deed."

And in likewise spake Eumæus, and to all Gods sped the prayer
For all-wise Odysseus returning to his house upbuilded fair.
So now when he had knowledge of their steadfast hearts and true,
Again in words he bespake them, and thuswise answered thereto:

"Lo, here am I, and at home. Many griefs have I had to bear,
And am come to the land of my fathers at last in the twentieth year,
And I wot that of all the homemen I am welcome to you alone.
Forsooth amid all the others no prayer have I heard and known,
No prayer for my returning a-back to my house and hall.
Unto you then the truth shall I tell, how hereafter things shall befall:
If a God these haughty Wooers shall quell beneath my hand
I shall give you a wife to each one, and thereto gear and land,
And a house by my house builded; and when all these deeds are done
Shall ye be Telemachus' fellows, yea, brethren of my son.

But come, another token most manifest will I show, [may know.
That the truth in your souls may be strengthened, and my very self ye
—Lo the scar of the hurt, which the wood-boar with his white tooth
drave on a tide,
When with Autolycus' children I sought Parnassus' side!"

So saying, the rags about him from the mighty weal he drew,
And they twain looked upon it, and all the tale they knew;
And they wept, and o'er wise Odysseus they cast their hands, they twain,
And kissed his head and his shoulders, and loved him and were fain;
And Odysseus also kissed them on their heads and on their hands.

And now amidst their wailing had the sunlight left the lands
Had not Odysseus refrained them; and he spake, and thus said he:
"Cease now your weeping and wailing lest any one may see
From out the hall a-coming, and thereof within may show.
Now enter we not together, but one after other go,
I first, ye following after: and take this for a sign from me.
For all the others, as many as high-heart Wooers be,
They will all of them hinder the giving unto me of the quiver and bow;
But, bearing the same in thine hands, Eumæus, do thou go
Through the house to give them to me; and tell thou the women withal
To shut and to lock the doors well-fitted that are to the hall;
And if any shall happen to hear the din or the groaning of men
Within our walls, then nowise let her go without doors then;
But before her work abiding in silence let her be.
But thou, O good Philœtius, I charge thee shut with a key
The gate of the garth, and make haste the cable across it to cast."

So saying, into the house of the pleasant place he passed,
And sat him adown on the settle from whence he erst arose;

And those homemen of goodly Odysseus moreover entered the house.

But Eurymachus this meanwhile was a-handling of the bow,
With the fire a-warming it over; and yet not even so
Might he bend it, and most hugely groaned his heart of valiancy,
And in grief he fell to speaking, and e'en such a word spake he:

"Out on it! Sorrow is on us for myself and all of these!
Not so much do I grieve for the wedding, though that be sore misease.
For a many there be of maidens Achæan, both here on the shore
Of Ithaca sea-begirdled, and in many a folkland more.
But if in the might of our bodies we fall so far below
The might of the godlike Odysseus, that we may not bend the bow,
Then e'en for the men of hereafter lo a pitiful tale to tell!"

But Antinoüs, son of Eupeithes, to answering him befell:
"Eurymachus, nought shall it be so, as thyself thou wottest indeed:
For e'en now though the folk to that God a holy feast do they speed,
And who can bend the bow that while? Let it be as now.
And were it not well if we left all these axes standing a-row?
For indeed I nowise deem it that any shall come to the hall
Of Odysseus, son of Laertes, and bear them off withal.
So come now, let the wine-swain fill all the cups a-row,
That we may pour drink-offering and lay by the crookèd bow.
And tomorn bid we Melanthius, who over the goats hath heed,
That the best of the goats up hither, yea, the flower of the flock, he lead,
And we to the Bowman's Glory, Apollo, shall offer the thighs,
And prove the bow, and accomplish the contest and the prize."

So Antinoüs spake, and all men consented to his word;
And came the henchmen, and over their hands the water poured,

And with the drink the younglings crowned all the wine-bowls there,
And filled the cups for the offering, and dealt to each his share.
But when they had poured, and had drunken whatso their souls deemed
Then spake the wise Odysseus from his craft-devising mood: [good

"Hearken to me, O Wooers of this Queen renownèd well,
Till I say what the soul in my breast now biddeth me talk and tell;
But Eurymachus am I praying, and Antinoüs godhead's peer
Over all, for he hath spoken a rightful word to hear.
Leave we the bow for a season, that the Gods may heed it still,
And the God shall give might to-morrow to whomsoever he will,
Yet give me the bow well-shaven, that here, before your sight,
I may try my hands and my prowess, if yet abideth the might
Wherewith my limbs the lithesome were furnished while agone;
Or if straying and ill-nurture by now have all foredone."

So he spake; and out of measure in all those the wrath did grow,
For fear lest he get to bending the shapely-shaven bow.
And Antinoüs fell a-chiding, a word he fashioned there:

"O wretch of guests! who lacketh all wit, e'en the littlest share,
Is it nought that amidst us high ones in peace thou makest cheer,
Nor lackest thy share of the banquet, and furthermore may'st hear
Our words and all we tell of; and none else is hearkening
Of strangers or of bedesmen to our talk of many a thing?
It is the sweet wine scathes thee; which hurteth others too,
Who take it greedily gaping, nor drink but what is due.
It was wine that bewildered the centaur, Eurytion, mighty of fame,
In the hall of the man, high-hearted Perithoüs, when he came
To the Lapithæ: in that while with wine his soul he distraught,
And, run mad in Perithoüs' house, great deeds of evil wrought,

But wrath fell on the lords, who leapt up and through the porch and the door
Haled him out, and the ears and nostrils from off the centaur shore
With the pitiless brass; so, bewildered, he wandered from part unto part,
Bearing the sin and the sorrow of the folly of his heart.
Thence then 'twixt the men and the centaurs the battle came to pass;
But first he brought bale on himself, for that heavy with wine he was.
And a mighty bale I forebode thee if thou shalt bend the bow,
And ye shall meet no kindness as amidst our folk ye go,
But in a black ship of the sea shall we verily send thee then
To King Echetus, the maimer and scathe of all mortal men,
Whence nought shall ever save thee. In peace sit drinking now,
Nor fall to strife and contest with men that are younger than thou."

But Penelope the heart-wise she fell to speaking there:
"To maltreat the guests, Antinoüs, is neither right nor fair,
E'en Telemachus' guests, whoever to this our house may wend.
Deem'st thou that if this stranger the great bow of Odysseus shall bend,
Putting trust in his hands, and the prowess that within the man is rife,
He shall lead me home and make me his very wedded wife?
Nay, the man himself in his breast no such a hope doth bear,
Nor yet need any man of you, of those that are feasting here,
Be vexing his heart hereover; 'twere a most unseemly thing."

Then Eurymachus, Polybus' son, thus spake in answering:
"O Daughter of Icarius, all-wise Penelope,
That the man should lead thee homeward no such a thought had we,
But we fear the shame and the rumour of men, and of women withal,
Lest some one of Achæans be saying, some man, the basest of all:
'Forsooth men worser than worse must go wooing the bed-fellow
Of a mighty man, and nowise might they bend his well-smoothed bow,
And lo another, a beggar, a wanderer, cometh thereto,

And lightly the bow hath he bended and shot the iron through.
So will they say, and of us a most pitiful tale will it be."

But to him thus spake in answer heart-wise Penelope:
"Eurymachus, nought 'mid the people can they be fair of fame
Who eat up the house of a chieftain and do him deeds of shame:
Why then make ado of this also to be for a pitiful tale?
And lo you! tall is the stranger, a well-knit man and hale,
And he boasts him of his kindred as the son of a father of might.
So give him the bow well-shaven that we may look on the sight.
And one thing now I tell you, and fulfilled shall be the same:
If he the bow hath bended, and Apollo give him the fame,
A goodly change of raiment, cloak and frock, will I give him then,
And a keen-head spear will I give him to ward him of dogs and of men,
And a two-edged sword moreover, and shoes on his feet will I do,
And will speed him whithersoever his soul may bid him go."

But Telemachus the heedful he answered presently:
"My mother, none of Achæans is a better man than I
To give the bow or withhold it from whatso man I will,
For as many as lord it over the rugged Ithacan hill,
Or dwell about the islands that off horse-kind Elis lie.
Of whom shall no man force me unwilling; not if I
Shall give this gear to the stranger straight out for his own to bear.
But go thy ways to the chamber, and heed thine own work there,
Distaff and loom, and the women id thou their work to speed.
But as for the bow, this matter it is for men to heed,
For all men, and me above all men; for the might of the house is in me."

Then, wondering, back to her chamber she gat her presently,
For in her heart was she storing the wise words of her son.

So then to the bower aloft with her handmaids was she gone,
Where she wept for her husband belovèd, Odysseus, till at last
The sweet sleep over her eyelids grey-eyed Athene cast.

Then the swineherd took up the bow to bear it adown the hall;
But throughout the halls the Wooers cried at him one and all;
And thus would one fall speaking 'midst those haughty younglings there:
"Thou hapless, thou gangrel swineherd! and whither dost thou bear
The crookèd bow? Now swiftly shall the swift hounds thou hast bred
Devour thee far from menfolk amidst the swine of thy stead,
If we have but the grace of Apollo, and the Deathless give their grace."

So they spake; and the bow he was bearing he laid adown in its place,
In fear because a many in the halls against him cried.
But Telemachus shouted at him a threat from the other side:
"Nay, bear on the bow, my father, lest thou do ill, heeding all!
Take heed lest I, thy younger, to driving thee forth shall fall,
And pelt thee afield with pebbles, since in might am I better than thou.
Yea, would that in hands and prowess as much mightier were I now
Than those others, they of the Wooers, that hang about the house!
Then speedily would I send them in manner dolorous
From out our halls and homestead, for they plan me bale hereby."

So he spake, and all the Wooers laughed on him pleasantly,
And their bitter wrath against him they laid aside withal.
And in that while the swineherd bare the bow adown the hall,
And drawing anear to Odysseus in his hands the weapons laid.
Then he called forth the nurse, Euryclea, and spake to her and said:
"Euryclea, thou the heart-wise, Telemachus biddeth thee
That the hall-doors closely-fitting thou shut and lock with a key;
And if any hear a groaning, or the noise of men and the din

Amidst our walls, in nowise go ye outdoors from within,
But there abide in silence beside the work ye speed."

So he spake; and his word was wingless and abode with her for her heed,
And she locked with a key the doors of the halls of the lovely stead.
And silently forth from the house meanwhile had Philœtius sped,
And therewith he bolted the gate of the well-walled forecourt there;
But there lay beneath the cloister a curved ship's mooring-gear,
A flag-wrought rope, and therewith he bound o'er the gate of the close,
And then gat him aback and sat down on the bench whence he erewhile arose,
And set his eyes on Odysseus, who as now the great bow bare,
And was turning it over on all sides, and trying it here and there,
Lest the worms its horn should have eaten while long was its master away,
And one would be eyeing his neighbour, and thuswise would he say:

"Lo here, a lover of bows, one cunning in archery!
Or belike in his house at home e'en such-like gear doth lie;
Or e'en such an one is he minded to fashion, since handling it still,
He turneth it o'er, this gangrel, this crafty one of ill!"

And then would another be saying of those younglings haughty and high:
"E'en so soon and so great a measure of gain may he come by
As he may now accomplish the bending of the bow."

So the Wooers spake; but Odysseus, that many a rede did know,
When the great bow he had handled, and eyed it about and along,
Then straight, as a man well learnèd in the lyre and the song,
On a new pin lightly stretcheth the cord, and maketh fast
From side to side the sheep-gut well-twined and overcast:
So the mighty bow he bended with no whit of labouring,
And caught it up in his right hand, and fell to try the string,

That 'neath his hand sang lovely as a swallow's voice is fair.
But great grief fell on the Wooers, and their skin changed colour there,
And mightily Zeus thundered, and made manifest a sign;
And thereat rejoiced Odysseus, the toil-stout man divine,
At that sign of the Son of Cronos, the crookèd-counselled Lord;
And he caught up a swift arrow that lay bare upon the board,
Since in the hollow quiver as yet the others lay,
Which those men of the Achæans should taste ere long that day,
And he laid it on the bow-bridge, and the nock and the string he drew,
And thence from his seat on the settle he shot a shaft that flew
Straight-aimed, and of all the axes missed not a single head,
From the first ring: through and through them, and out at the last it sped
The brass-shod shaft; and therewith to Telemachus spake he:

"The guest in thine halls a-sitting in nowise shameth thee,
Telemachus. I missed not thy mark, nor overlong
Toiled I the bow a-bending; stark yet am I and strong.
Forsooth, the Wooers that shamed me no more may make me scorn!
But now for these Achæans is the hour and the season born
To dight the feast in the daylight, and otherwise to be fain
With the song and the harp thereafter that crown the banquet's gain."

So he spake; and with bent brow nodded, and Telemachus the lord,
Dear son of the godlike Odysseus, girt on his whetted sword;
His dear hand gripped the spear-shaft, and his father's side anear,
He stood by the high-seat crested with the gleaming brazen gear.

BOOK XXII.

ARGUMENT.

HEREIN IS TOLD OF THE SLAYING OF THE WOOERS IN THE HOUSE OF ODYSSEUS.

BUT Odysseus of many a rede of his rags he stripped him bare,
And on the great threshold he leapt, and the bow, and the quiver
Fulfilled of arrows he handled, and all the shafts to the ground [fair
Before his feet then poured he, and spake to those Wooers around:

"Thuswise then is accomplished the strife so hard to do;
Now another mark will I loose at that no man hath hit hitherto,
If I perchance may attain it, and so fame of Apollo be earned."

So he spake, and the bitter shaft on Antinoüs then he turned;
Who e'en now was just upraising a golden cup wrought fair
Two-eared; and to drink of the wine his hands about it were,
And no foreboding of slaughter his heart was heeding then;
For who might ever be deeming that amidst of feasting men
That man alone among many, for as stark as he were and great,
For him would fashion the death-day, and the bale of the blackness of fate?
But Odysseus loosed, and smote him amidmost of the throat,
And therewith the head of the arrow through his tender neck thrust out,
And sidelong he rolled over; from his hand down fell the cup
As he gat the hurt, and straightway through his nostrils spouted up
The thick gush of the man's-blood; and his feet spurned out at the board
And cast it adown, that the victuals wide over the ground were poured,

And the bread and the roasted flesh were defiled. And all over the hall
Uprose the din of the Wooers when they saw their fellow's fall.
And uprisen, about the feast-hall they leapt from bench and chair,
And turned their eyes from all sides to the walls well-builded there,
Where never a shield was hanging, or strong spear for them to take.

Then they railed upon Odysseus, and in bitter words they spake:
"Ill shootest thou at menfolk, O guest, and no contest again
Hereafter shalt thou hap on; for sure is thy bitter bane,
Since a man thou thus hast slaughtered far best of all youths that be
In Ithaca here: but the vultures hereby shall devour thee."

So each one spake; for they deemed that unwitting the man he had slain,
And they had no understanding, fools as they were, and vain,
That to all the end of the Death-doom was hard upon them now;
Unto whom spake the wise Odysseus, scowling from knitted brow:

"O Dogs! And ye were saying that I should come home no more
From the people of the Trojans! So ye wasted my house and my store,
And lay with my women servants perforce and against my will,
And wert wooing my wife from off me when I was living still;
And neither the Gods were ye fearing that hold the heavens the wide,
Nor yet the vengeance of menfolk that hereafter should betide.
But now the end of the Death-doom is on you one and all."

So he spake; and over them all thereon did the pale fear fall,
And about him each glared, seeking whereby sheer bane to shun;
But Eurymachus spake in answer, and he the only one:

"If thou be indeed Odysseus the Ithacan come back,
Of the deeds of us Achæans no right thy word doth lack,

For much folly here in the homestead and much afield have we wrought;
But Antinoüs, he that here lieth already come to nought,
Was the cause of all, for he speeded such evil deeds and such,
Not longing so much for the wedding, nor heeding it overmuch,
As devising other matters which Zeus hath not fulfilled;
For to rule o'er the Ithacan land well-builded this he willed,
And to lie in wait for thy son that he might slay him there.
But himself by the Death-doom is dead: so thy people do thou spare,
And we mid the people hereafter will make atonement for all,
For what we have eaten and drunken within thine house and hall.
And a twenty-beeve atonement from each man shall there be,
And gold and brass shall be given till we melt the heart in thee.
But meanwhile 'tis nought blameworthy that thou art wrathful now."

Then spake all-wise Odysseus as he scowled from knitted brow:
"Eurymachus, were ye to give me your heritage every whit,
Yea all ye have, and whatso from elsewhere ye might add to it,
Yet not e'en so from the slaying these hands will I withhold
Ere on the Wooers I wreak me for their folly manifold.
—There then it lieth before you to fight me face to face,
Or whoso may 'scape the Death-doom to flee from out the place.
Yet no man here, meseemeth, the bitter bane shall shun."

So he spake, and the hearts within them and their knees failed all undone,
But the second time Eurymachus spake forth unto them there:

"O friends, since this man will stay not his hands that none may bear,
And whereas the bow well-shaven he hath, and the quiver withal,
He will shoot from the fair-smoothed threshold until he hath slain us all.
But now let us be mindful of the happy tide of war,
And draw forth our swords from the scabbards, and hold up the boards [before

These shafts with black death laden, and in close array fall on
To drive him from the threshold and the door, if it may be done.
And then go we to the city and in haste send up the cry;
And so shall this man have speeded his last shaft ere he die."

And e'en as the word he uttered, he drew his keen sword out
Brazen, on each side shearing, and with a fearful shout
Rushed on him; but Odysseus that very while let fly
And smote him with the arrow in the breast, the pap hard by,
And drove the swift shaft to the liver, and adown to the ground fell the sword
From out of his hand, and doubled he hung above the board,
And staggered; and whirling he fell, and the meat was scattered around,
And the double cup moreover, and his forehead smote the ground;
And his heart was wrung with torment, and with both feet spurning he smote
The high-seat; and over his eyen did the cloud of darkness float.

And then it was Amphinomus, who drew his whetted sword
And fell on, making his onrush 'gainst Odysseus the glorious lord,
If perchance he might get him out-doors: but Telemachus him forewent,
And a cast of the brazen war-spear from behind him therewith sent
Amidmost of his shoulders, that drave through his breast and out,
And clattering he fell, and the earth all the breadth of his forehead smote

Then a-back Telemachus hastened, and left his long-shaft spear
Still stuck there in Amphinomus, since the onset did he fear
Of some one of those Achæans as the long spear forth he drew,
Who should smite with the sword a down-stroke, or thrust him through and through.
So he ran and unto his father belovèd his way did he make,
And standing close anigh him a wingèd word he spake:

"O father, forsooth, a war-shield and two spears will I bring thee now,
And a helm all brazen-fashioned well fitted to thy brow,
And myself will go and arm me and give arms to the swineherd here,
And others unto the neatherd; for 'twere better our armour to bear."

But to him then spake and answered Odysseus of many a rede:
"Run, bring them while yet are the arrows to ward me in my need,
Lest they thrust me off from the doorway, one man 'gainst many here."

So he spake, and Telemachus straightway obeyed his father dear,
And ran his ways to the chamber, where the glorious war-gear lay,
And thence he took four war-shields, four spears he had away,
And four helms brazen-fashioned, and bushed with horses' hair,
And he bore them along, and right swiftly came aback to his father dear.
Then he the first among them the brass on his body had,
And the two thralls in like manner in the lovely arms were clad,
And they stood about Odysseus the wise and the diverse of rede.
But he, while he yet had the arrows to ward him in his need,
Still one by one of the Wooers that yet in his house did dwell
He aimed at and shot, and there ever one over another they fell;
But when he lacked of arrows for his shaft-speeding hand,
He laid by the bow and leaned it against the door-post to stand
Of that well-builded feast-hall, 'gainst the shining entrance wall,
And he across his shoulders cast the sevenfold shield withal,
And the well-wrought helm hair-crested he set on his noble head,
And from aloft now nodded the battle-crest of dread,
And two spears he took strong-fashioned, and shod with the shining brass.

Now a certain high-up postern mid the well-built wall there was,
And thereby at the top of the threshold of that well-builded hall
Was a way to the aisle by door-leaves well-fitted and shut withal.

Thereof was Odysseus bidding the swineherd have a care,
And take his stand beside it, for no outgate else was there.

Now amidst them spake Agelaüs, and said to all thereby:
"O friends, now might not some one go up to the postern on high,
And tell the folk, that the rumour and cry all around be cast,
And speedily then would this man have shot his latest and last?"

Then Melanthius the goatherd spake out amidst them there:
"Not so, Zeus-bred Agelaüs, for thereto fearfully near
Are the lovely doors to the forecourt, and the mouth of the aisle is strait,
And e'en one man might ward it, if he were stark and great.
But come now, from the chamber let me bring you battle-gear
To arm you; for meseemeth therein and no otherwhere
Has Odysseus laid his armour, with his well-renownèd son."

And with that word the goatherd, Melanthius, straightway won
Up to Odysseus' chamber through the windows of the hall,
And thence he gat twelve war-shields and as many spears withal,
And as many brazen war-helms bushed with the horses' hair,
And therewith ran back swiftly, and gave to the Wooers there.
Loose then grew the knees of Odysseus, and the heart in him grew soft,
When he saw how they donned the hauberks, and in their hands aloft
Were shaking the spears long-shafted, for his work seemed great indeed.
And unto Telemachus straightway a wingèd word did he speed:

"Telemachus, one of the women about the house I wis
Stirs up ill war against us; or Melanthius else it is."

Then Telemachus the heedful thus answering fell to say:
"'Twas I myself, O father, that herein went astray,

And none else was blameworthy, for the doors that fit aright
Of the chamber I left ajar, and their watch was o'er-keen of sight.
But go thou, good Eumæus, and the chamber door shut to,
And note if one of the women this deed 'gainst us doth do,
Or Dolius' son Melanthius, whom indeed for the doer I take."

But while unto each other in e'en such wise they spake,
Melanthius the goatherd to the chamber went again
To fetch the goodly war-gear, whom the swineherd good marked plain,
And spake therewith to Odysseus who stood anigh that while:

"O Zeus-bred son of Laertes, Odysseus of many a guile,
Now he, that man of mischief, e'en he whom he deemed was the man,
Is going unto the chamber; so tell me as straight as ye can
Whether I myself shall slay him if the better man I be,
Or shall I bring him hither, that he may pay to thee
For all his many transgressions that he in thine house did devise?"

But to him thus spake in answer Odysseus diversely wise:
"Within the halls here soothly shall Telemachus here with me
Yet hold the high-heart Wooers, for as eager-fierce as they be;
But ye twain, his hands to his feet do ye twist aback and bind,
And cast him into the chamber; and shut ye the doors behind,
And withal make fast unto him a cable twisted well,
And haul him aloft to a pillar anigh the rafters to dwell,
That he a long while living may suffer grievous pain."

So he spake, and straight they hearkened and did his bidding, they twain.
They went their ways to the chamber, and unseen of the man they were,
For within the nook of the chamber he sought about for gear,
While standing each by a doorpost abided there those men:

So Melanthius the goatherd came o'er the threshold then,
And a war-helm wrought full fairly in one hand did he hold,
And a broad shield in the other, old now and foul with mould:
'Twas Laertes the lord who bore it, while yet a youth, in his hands,
But cast aside had it lain, and all gone were the seams of its bands.

So the twain rushed on and caught him, and haled him in by the hair,
And him heart-smitten with anguish they cast on the pavement there,
And hand to foot they bound him, and sore the bonds they made,
Hard twisting the limbs behind him, e'en as the master bade,
The toil-stout goodly Odysseus, the old Laertes' son.
Then they made him fast to a cable of strands well over-done,
And haled him aloft to a pillar close up to the beams of the place.

Then didst thou, O swineherd Eumæus, speak a bitter word to his face:
"Yea there forsooth, Melanthius, shalt thou watch all through the night
In a fair and soft bed lying, as for thee is meet and right;
Nor yet shalt thou miss beholding the gold-throned Mother of Day
Coming up from the eddies of Ocean as thou bringest thy goats on their way
Up hither to the Wooers, a feast in the house to dight."

There then for that while they left him in grievous bond strained tight,
And the twain did on their war-weed, and shut the shining door,
And went their ways to Odysseus, the wise-heart, crafty of lore.

There then all breathing fury those four on the threshold stood,
And they in the house withinwards were a many men and good;
But amidst them the Daughter of Zeus, Athene, came standing anigh,
And like was her body to Mentor's and like was the voice of her cry;
And Odysseus rejoiced when he saw her, and spake out a word to hear:

"Ward off me the war-play, Mentor! remember thy fellow dear!
Who hath done thee good deeds ever; and like-aged thou art unto me."

So he spake, but the people's Uprouser, Athene, he deemed it to be,
But the Wooers amid the feast-hall cried out from the other side,
And Damastor's son Agelaüs, he fell the Maid to chide:

"Mentor, let not Odysseus with words prevail o'er thee
To fight against the Wooers and his battle-aid to be!
For this our mind and purpose, meseemeth, shall be done;
And whenso these we have slain, the father and the son,
Then thou with them shalt be slain, whereas in the halls of the stead
Such deeds thou art set on doing, for which thou shalt pay with thine head.
But when with the brass we have reft you of the might that once was yours,
Thy goods, yea all that thou holdest in thine house and out a-doors,
We will mingle with those of Odysseus, and neither the sons of thee,
Nor thy daughters will we suffer within the halls to be,
Nor thy trusty wife will we suffer mid the Ithacan folk to go."

So he spake, and exceeding anger in Athene's heart 'gan grow,
And she fell to upbraid Odysseus with bitter words and to say:
"Nought bideth thy might, Odysseus, and thy valour hath no stay,
As when concerning Helen, the white-armed well-begot,
For nine years long with the Troy-folk ye fought and faltered not,
And in the fearful war-play ye slew so many an one,
And the wide-wayed Burg of Priam by thy devise was won;
And now that thou art gotten to thine havings and thine house
Art thou woe that against the Wooers thou must needs be valorous?
Come hither, my weakling! Stand by me and look on the deeds to be
That thou may'st behold the fashion of Mentor Alcimus' son,
How he payeth back well-doing amid the rout of foes!"

So she spake, and yet not wholly gave clear victory unto those,
For yet a little longer would she try the valour and might,
Both of the man Odysseus, and his son, the glory of fight;
But flying aloft, she gat her to the darkling feast-hall's beam,
And there sat her adown, and a swallow to look on did she seem.

Now fell to stir up the Wooers Agelaüs, Damastor's son,
And Eurynomus and Amphimedon and Demoptolemus fell on,
And Peisandrus son of Polyctor, and heart-wise Polybus;
For these were the best of the Wooers, and by far most valorous
Of those who yet were living and fought their lives to gain,
But the rest, the bow had quelled them, and the rush of the arrow-rain.

So amid them cried Agelaüs, and to all spake out the tale:
"Friends, now shall this man refrain him and his hands that never fail;
With a word of empty boasting hence now hath Mentor gone,
And in the first of the doorway are these men left alone.
Therefore not all together your long spears do ye cast,
Let but six hurl together; and may Zeus grant us at last
The smiting of Odysseus, and for us the glory and gain!
No need to care for the others when he hath fallen slain."

So he spake, and all right eager hurled even as he bade,
But all the casts Athene but vain and idle made:
For one, he smote the doorpost of that well-builded house,
And another reached the doorleaves that were fitted well and close,
And the ashen shaft brass heavy of another smote the wall.

But when the spears of the Wooers they had thus 'scaped one and all
Then fell to speech Odysseus, the goodly toil-stout lord:

"O friends, at last I say it, and give to you the word
To hurl into the throng of the Wooers, so sore as now they long
To strip us after the slaughter, and heap up wrong on wrong."

So he spake, and all they forthright the whetted war-spears threw,
Straight aiming: Demoptolemus therewith Odysseus slew,
Telemachus slew Euryades, and the swineherd there did quell
Lord Elatus, and Peisandrus before the neatherd fell.
There all they lay a-grovelling and the wide floor bit withal.

Then aback shrank the throng of the Wooers to the inmost of the hall,
And the others rushed upon them, and drew out the spears from the dead.

Then again the eager Wooers their whetted war-spears sped,
But Athene so wrought that a many thereof in vain should fall,
For one of them smote the doorpost of that well-builded hall,
And another smote the door-leaves well fashioned close to fit,
And the ashen shaft brass-heavy of one the wall did hit.
But Amphimedon smote Telemachus his hand about the wrist,
Where the brass did graze but lightly, and all but barely missed:
And Ctesippus smote Eumæus o'er the shield with a long-shaft spear,
And his shoulder grazed; but the shaft flew on and fell down there.

Then they about Odysseus the heart-wise, diverse of rede,
Amidst the throng of the Wooers their whetted spears did speed.
There city-waster Odysseus smote Eurydamas outright,
And Telemachus Amphimedon, and the swineherd did Polybus smite,
And the man that herded the oxen, Ctesippus, there he smote
Amidmost the breast; and thereover a boasting word did he shout:

"Polytherses' son, taunt-loving, now never any more

Talk big and yield to thy folly, but turn the matter o'er
To the Gods, since they full soothly are better far than thou.
Take this guest-gift for the ox-foot that thou gavest even now
Unto Odysseus the godlike when he begged adown his hall."

Thus the herd of the shambling oxen. But Odysseus therewithal,
Hand to hand with the son of Damastor, with his long spear thrust him through,
And Telemachus Leocritus, Evenor's son, did undo
With a spear-thrust amidst of the belly, and drave the brass right out,
And he fell on his face, and the hall-floor the breadth of his forehead smote.

But her man-destroying Ægis upheld Athene then
Aloft from the roof; and fear-struck were the souls of all those men,
And they fled about the feast-hall in such wise as the kine of the herd,
Whom the gadfly the swift-flitting hath fallen upon and scared
In the season of the spring-tide, when long out the day-time draws.
But the others, e'en as vultures hook-nebbed, of crooked claws
From out the mountains coming, stoop on the birds that go
Swift hurrying over the plain, from the high clouds cowering a-low,
And those fall on and slaughter, nor is there any might,
Nor ever a way for fleeing; and men in the prey delight:
—In such wise on the Wooers about the house fell those,
And on either hand they smote them, and fearful the groans arose
As the skulls of men were smitten, and in blood did the pavement swim.

But Leiodes ran to Odysseus, and caught the knees of him,
And fell to praying him pity; and such wingèd words spake he:
"By thy knees, I beseech thee, Odysseus, to have compassion on me,
For I tell thee that unto the women that are in thine house and hall
I have said and done nought wanton; but the other Wooers withal
Have I refrained them, whenever of such deeds they had a will,

Though nought to me would they hearken to hold their hands from ill.
So now for this wanton folly an ugly fate have they won:
But I, their priest of burnt-offering, who nought herein have done,
Shall fall, and no grace abideth for doing righteous deed."

But with bent brows looking upon him spake Odysseus of many a rede:
"And if the priest of burnt-offering thou be, as thou dost say,
Many times in these halls meseemeth wilt thou have been wont to pray
That the end of my glad returning might be far away from me,
That my wife with thee might be wending and bear her babes for thee.
Therefore from the death o'ershadowing thy life thou shalt not save."

Therewith in his hand most mighty he caught up a battle glaive,
That lay there fallen from the hand of Agelaüs late slain,
And drave it through amidmost of his neck and clave it atwain,
So that e'en as he was speaking the head with the dust was blent.

But the son of Terpes the minstrel, yet shunning black fate went,
E'en Phemius, he who sang perforce to the Wooers' band;
And there he stood, yet holding the shrilly harp in hand,
Hard by the postern, and pondered in his mind two ways of it,
Whether going forth of the feast-hall by the well-wrought altar to sit
Of the mighty Zeus of the Garths, whereon Laertes of old
And Odysseus had burned the ox-thighs in offerings manifold;
Or else to Odysseus running to beseech him by his knees;
And, turning it o'er in his mind, it seemed the better of these,
The knees of the son of Laertes, Odysseus, to cling around.
So therewith the harp wrought hollow he set upon the ground,
Midways betwixt the wine-bowl and the high-seat silver-wrought.
And he ran straight up to Odysseus, and his knees about he caught,
And to him in supplication such wingèd words spake he:

"By thy knees I beseech thee, Odysseus, to have compassion on me,
For to thee shall be grief hereafter for the singer's slaughtering
If ye slay me, who unto the Gods and unto menfolk sing;
And myself myself have learned it: and the God in the mind of me
All manner of lays hath planted; and belike I may sing unto thee
As unto a God. So desire not the smiting of my head!
Forsooth by Telemachus also, thy dear son, shall the tale be said,
That unwilling and unlonging in thine house was I harbouring,
Unto the folk of the Wooers amidst their feasts to sing,
For many men, men mightier, brought me here in mine own despite."

So he spake, and to him was hearkening Telemachus' holy might,
And straight he came up to his father and thuswise spake thereto;
"Withhold thee, nor yet with the brass this sackless man thrust through!
And the henchman Medon spare we, who in this house evermore
Would cherish me and heed me when a youngling heretofore,
If Philœtius or the swineherd have slain him not as yet,
Or thee in thine anger raging midst the house he hath not met."

So he spake; and Medon heard him, well learned in wisdom fair,
Who, shunning the black death-doom lay low and cowering there
'Neath a high seat, and wrapped closely in an oxhide newly flayed;
Then straight he arose from the high-seat, and adown the oxhide laid,
And unto Telemachus running his knees he clasped about,
And to him in supplication these wingèd words spake out:

"O friend, I am here! withhold thee! to thy father speak the word,
Lest he in his might undo me with the brass of the whetted sword
In his wrath against the Wooers, who in his house and hall
Have wasted his wealth in their folly, nor honoured him at all."

But Odysseus of much counsel smiled in his face and spake:
"Heart up! since this man spares thee, and thy safeguard thus doth make;
That thou in thine heart may'st know it, and to other men may'st tell
That better than ill-doing are the ways of doing well.
But get ye forth from the feast-hall, to the forecourt make your ways,
And sit there aloof from the murder with the singer of many lays,
While yet in the house I labour at whatso needeth there."

So he spake, but straight without doors and forth of the hall did they fare,
And before the great Zeus' altar they sat them down they twain,
On all sides peering about them, and still expecting bane.

But about his house peered Odysseus, if yet a man there were
Who shunning the black doom-day was left a-lurking there;
But adown in the dust and the blood he beheld them all lying about
Yea, as many as the fishes which the fishers have drawn out
With a net of many meshes from out the hoary sea
Up on to the hollow sea-beach: there heaped up all they be
Cast up upon the sea-sand, desiring the waves of the brine;
But the sun their life is taking with the glory of his shine.
Thus then in heaps the Wooers on one another lay.

Then at last unto Telemachus did all-wise Odysseus say:
"Telemachus, go and call thou the nurse Euryclea here,
That somewhat I may tell her which on my mind I bear."

So he spake, and Telemachus straightway his lovèd father obeyed,
And smote on the door and a word to the nurse Euryclea said:
"Up hither, O ancient of days, who over the women-thralls
Art ever the ward and the watcher within our house and halls;
Come! for my father calls thee, and hath a word to tell."

So he spake; and the word was wingless and by her yet did dwell,
And therewith she opened the doors of the hall of the pleasant place,
And went her ways; but the youngling led on before her face.
And there she found Odysseus amidst the men dead slain,
With blood and gore bedabbled, as a lion stalketh amain,
Who cometh from devouring an ox of the meadowy place,
And all his breast is bloody and either side his face,
And fearful is he fashioned to look upon with eyes:
So befouled were the feet of Odysseus and his hands in e'en such wise.

But she, when she saw the corpses and that abundant blood,
Was setting up a joy-shout, so great seemed the work and so good;
But Odysseus refrained and withheld her, though yearning sore indeed,
And sent his voice out toward her, and this winged word fell to speed:

"Rejoice in thy soul, O goodwife, and thy shout of joy refrain,
For nowise is it righteous to boast above the slain.
But these men the Fate of the Gods and their wanton deeds did quell,
Whereas they honoured no man of men on the earth that dwell,
Were he good or were he evil, whosoever came their way.
So through their wanton folly met they loathly end to-day.
But come! of these home-women do thou tell the tale to me,
Whichso of them have shamed us and whichso sackless be."

Then the loved nurse Eurycléa, she spake and answered this:
"To thee, forsooth, my nursling, will I tell the tale as it is;
Within the halls of thine homestead a fifty handmaids dwell,
And to work the work of women have we learned them all right well,
Both the carding of wool and the bearing of thraldom as they may.
Of these there are twelve in all who have trodden the shameful way,
And me they nowise honour, nor yet Penelope.

And Telemachus is but new grown into manhood, nor might it be
That his mother him would suffer to order the women thralls.
But now let me go up aloft to the bright bower of the halls
To tell thy wife: for slumber some God on her hath laid."

But Odysseus of many a rede to her made answer and said:
"Nay, nowise her shalt thou waken: go bid the women here,
E'en they who deeds unseemly have wrought in days that were."

So he spake, and adown the feast-hall therewith did the goodwife go
With the message to the women, to bid them haste thereto.
But Odysseus called unto him Telemachus, and the twain,
The neatherd and the swineherd, and spake winged words again:

"Fall to and bear out the corpses, and bid the women to aid,
And thereafter all the high seats and the tables lovely-made
With water and with sponges hole-pierced cleanse thoroughly.
But when ye have ordered all things in the house as they shall be,
Then, bringing forth the women from out the well-built hall,
Midways 'twixt the vaulted kitchen and the forecourt's holy wall
With the long-edged sword there smite them, till ye have undone clean
The souls of all, and no longer they remember the love that hath been
That they gat from the Wooers in secret, and mingled with them were."

And e'en as the word he was speaking came the women huddling there,
And bitterly they bewailed them, and fast the tears they shed.
First then they bore out of the feast-hall the bodies of the dead,
And laid them under the cloister of the garth well-walled about,
Each propped against the other, and Odysseus himself gave out
The word, and the work he ordered, and perforce the women bare.
And therewithal the high-seats and the tables fashioned fair

With water and with sponges hole-pierced they washed all sweet;
But Telemachus and the swineherd, and the herder of the neat,
Throughout the house well-builded with shovels scraped the floors,
And the handmaids took the scrapings and bore them out a-doors.

But when the hall of the homestead they had set in order at last,
From out the well-built feast-hall with the women-thralls they passed
To betwixt the vaulted kitchen and the forecourt's holy wall,
And in a strait place shut them whence no outgate was at all.
Then Telemachus to his fellows began, and thus he spake:
"By a clean death nought am I willing the lives from these to take,
Who things so grievous shameful have heaped upon my head,
And also on my mother, and have lain in the Wooers' bed."

So he spake; and therewith the cable of a black-prowed ship he found,
And made fast to a lofty pillar and cast it the kitchen around,
And stretched it aloft that no one might touch the earth with her feet;
And e'en as the long-winged thrushes or the doves 'gainst a net may beat,
Which, when unto roost they betake them amidst the boughs is spread,
And verily there are they taken and they come to a loathly bed;
So these held their heads in order, and round their necks each one
Ran the noose, that they might perish by the evilest death undone;
And they writhed with their feet for a little, but their season was but short

Then did they bring Melanthius through the porch and into the court,
And they cropped with the ruthless brass the ears and the nose from his face,
And drew out his privy parts for the dogs to eat raw in the place,
And hewed off his hands and his feet in their fierce and fell intent.
Then their hands and their feet they washed, and into the house they went,
And came unto Odysseus, and done was the work of the day.
Then unto the nurse beloved, Euryclea, did he say:

"Bring brimstone, the cure of evil, goodwife, bring fire unto me,
That I the house may hallow; then bid thou Penelope
That now she get her hither, and her handmaidens withal.
Yea, speed hither all the women that serve in our house and hall."

But the dear nurse Euryclea in turn made answer thus:
"Yea, this thou sayest, O nursling, in manner righteous.
But come, a cloak and a kirtle, fair weed let me bring thee to hand,
Nor with broad shoulders huddled in rags thuswise do thou stand
Amidst of our halls, for soothly blameworthy this thing were."

But Odysseus of many a rede thus spake and answered her: 490
"Nay, first of all I prithee let the fire in our halls be made."

So he spake, and the nurse, beloved Euryclea, nought gainsaid,
But fetched the fire and the brimstone, and Odysseus therewithal
In goodly fashion hallowed the court and the house and the hall.
Then the goodwife went her ways through Odysseus' house the fair
With her message to the women to bid them hasten there,
And they came forth from the chamber, and candle in hand they had,
And they hung about Odysseus, and embraced him and were glad.
And they kissed him and caressed him, his head and his shoulders withal,
And clung to his hand, and sweet longing upon his soul did fall 500
For weeping and for wailing; for his heart, he knew them all.

BOOK XXIII.

ARGUMENT.

ODYSSEUS MAKETH HIMSELF KNOWN TO HIS WIFE PENELOPE.

THEN the old wife, joyfully laughing, to the bower-aloft did fare,
To tell the tale to her mistress that within was her husband dear;
And her knees were brisk, and beneath her her feet went trippingly:
So she stood o'er the head of the Queen, and to her the word spake she:

"Waken, Penelope! waken, dear child! that thou may'st behold
The very thing that thou wouldest, and the hope of thy days of old;
Odysseus hath come! he hath reached his own house, though late it is,
And hath slain the masterful Wooers, who have troubled that house of his,
And have eaten his wealth, and have cowed his son so grievously."

But therewith thus bespake her heart-wise Penelope:
'Stark mad the Gods have made thee, dear nurse, for they have the might
To make a body witless, though full wise she be aright:
And the wanton fool into wisdom they may shift if they have the will;
And thee have they marred, who aforetime hadst a heart of wit and skill.
Ah, why then dost thou mock me, and my mind of many an ache
With these wild tales of thy telling, and me why wilt thou wake
From the sweet sleep that hath bound me and wrapped mine eyelids o'er?
Never yet in such sleep have I slumbered since Odysseus went of yore
To seek the Evil Ilios, that none should name at all.
Now therefore get thee downward and wend thy ways to the hall:
For if any one else of the women whom here I have and keep

Had come with such a story to waken me from sleep,
Then back unto the feast-hall had I sent her speedily
In woeful wise: but herein thine eld excuseth thee."

Then the dear nurse Euryclea in such wise answered she:
"Dear child, nowise I mock thee, but in sooth and in verity
Odysseus is here in the house according to my tale;
That guest whom all men soever in the house did bemock and berail;
And Telemachus hath known him in the house this while indeed,
But of his heedful wisdom hath hidden his father's rede,
That the better he might wreak him of the wrong of masterful men."

She spake, and glad grew the other, and leapt from the bedplace then,
And cast her arms about her, and the tears from her eyelids shed;
And therewith her voice she uttered, and wingèd words she said:

"Dear friend, and tellest thou truly a soothfast tale to-day?
And in very truth hath he gotten aback to his house as ye say?
How then upon the Wooers, the shameless, laid he hand,
He one alone, and they ever in their place a steadfast band?"

But the dear nurse Euryclea thus spake to her the word:
"I saw not, nor noted, but only the groans of the dying I heard:
For we, we sat bewildered in the nook of the well-built house,
And the door-leaves meetly fitted therein did hold us close,
Till thy son Telemachus called me, coming out to that end from the hall,
Because indeed his father had sent him forth to call:
There found I Odysseus standing 'mid the corpses of the slain,
While all about on the hall-floor, hard-trodden down amain,
They lay one man on the other. It had gladdened thine heart to see
How with blood and gore bedabbled as a lion there stood he.

But now all they are gathered in a heap by the door of the close,
And he the while with brimstone now hallows his lovely house,
Having litten a mighty fire, and sends me to call thee thereto.
Come follow, that both ye twain, both the dear hearts of you,
May enter into gladness; for through many a woe have ye passed,
And now the hope long lingering hath come about at last.
He hath come back alive to his hearth, and there hath he found thee [still
And his son in the halls; and those Wooers who have wrought him wrong and ill,
On all those hath he avenged him within his house and hall."

But to her Penelope answered, and the heart-wise spake withal:
"Dear friend, boast not so bigly, nor laugh aloud outright:
Forsooth, thou wottest how welcome in the house would be this sight
To all, but most unto me, and the son betwixt us begot.
But the tale that thus thou tellest is nowise true I wot;
But rather some one of the Deathless these masterful Wooers hath slain
In his wrath at their grievous outrage, and the ill they have wrought
For no one did they worship of the men that dwell on earth [amain.
Whoso might happen upon them, of worth or of unworth.
So their bane hath their folly brought them: but Odysseus, passed away
To his homefare afar from Achæa, and he is dead to-day."

But the dear nurse Euryclea she answered her, and said:
"Ah, what a word, my nursling, from the wall of thy teeth hath fled!
Whereas thou say'st that thine husband, who standeth down there on the hearth,
Shall never come home! Yea, ever of belief in thy soul is dearth.
But come now, another token most plain shall I tell thee in sooth:
That scar, which of old the wood-boar once drave with his white tooth,
Did I behold as I washed him, and longed to tell it to thee;
But he caught me, and laid his hand right over the mouth of me,

And suffered not my speaking through his manifold wisdom and wit.
But follow me; and for my part I will lay my life on it!
And if I beguile thee, slay me by the evilest death ye may."

So Penelope the heart-wise in answer fell to say:
"Dear friend, the God's own counsels, they that live for evermore,
'Tis hard for thee to get at, though thou wottest diverse lore.
Yet wend we now to my son; that we may see the sight
Of these dead men, the Wooers, and him who hath slain them outright."

Therewith she went down from her bower, and sore the heart in her
Was wavering, if she should question from aloof her husband dear,
Or go up and take him, and kiss him on his hands and on his head;
But when she came and passed over the stone threshold of the stead,
Then over against Odysseus sat she down by the other wall
In the light of the fire: but he soothly sat adown by a pillar tall,
With eyes cast down, expecting till mayhap some speech should arise
From his bed-fellow the glorious, since she saw him with her eyes.
But a long while sat she silent, with her heart in all amaze,
And one while face unto face would she sit, and on him gaze,
And one while knew not his body for the wretched raiment's sake.

Then Telemachus fell to chide her, and the word therewith he spake:
"O mother, thou ill mother, that bear'st an unkind heart,
Why ever from my father dost thou hold thee so apart.
Nor wilt ask him and seek answer a-sitting by his side?
No other woman surely so hard-hearted would abide
To hold her aloof from her lord, who so burdened with bale to bear,
Hath come back to the land of his fathers at last in the twentieth year.
But ever the heart within thee is harder than the stone."

Then Penelope the heart-wise thus spake unto her son :
" My child, the heart in my bosom in all amaze is caught,
Nor a word may I speak unto him nor question him of aught,
Nor face to face behold him. But if it be verily so
That this is Odysseus come home, then the surer shall we know
True knowledge of each other : for tokens have we got
That are hidden from all others whereof we twain well wot."

So she spake, and the goodly Odysseus, the toil-stout, smiled as he heard,
And unto Telemachus straightway he spake a wingèd word :
" Telemachus, suffer thy mother within these halls to try
The man I am ; and full knowledge shall she have speedily.
For now whereas I am foul and my body basely clad,
She honours me not, nor deems me to be the man she had.
But now let us look unto it the better way to gain :
For if one amidst of a people one man alone hath slain
Who hath left but a few behind him revenge for him to win,
Yet shall such an one flee, leaving his fatherland and kin ;
But a city's prop have we slaughtered, yea the very flower of the youth
Of the Ithacan folk : so to heed it is my bidding to thee forsooth."

But Telemachus the heedful thus answered him and spake :
" Dear father, see thou to it ! for thy counsel all do take
For the best that is among menfolk, nor would any vie with thee
Whoso may be the other of all mortal men that be ;
But we full fain will follow, and this I say outright,
Nought shall we fail of stoutness according to our might."

But Odysseus of many a rede spake out, and thus said he :
" Well, therefore shall I tell thee what seemeth best to me ;
For first you men shall wash you, and do on your kirtles withal,

Then bid the handmaids array them throughout the house and hall,
And then let the godlike minstrel, his shrilly harp in hand,
Unto the gamesome dance-play go leading all the band,
So that any would say 'twas a wedding of those who may hear it without,
Were he one on the way a-wending, or a neighbour of hereabout;
Lest the rumour of the slaying of the Wooers should be spread
Broadcast about the city, ere we get us out from the stead,
And unto our land well-wooded, and there may we think of the thing,
What gain the Lord of Olympus unto our hand may bring."

He spake; and they hearkened and did it, the deed that he bade be done:
For first of all did they wash them, and do their kirtles on,
And the women arrayed them, and therewith did the godlike minstrel take
His hollow harp, and amidst them he smote desire awake
For the dancing-play the happy, and the music honey-sweet,
And the great house groaned around them, and around to the noise of the
Of the dancing men and the women, fair-girdled all about, [feet
And thus would one be saying who heard it from without:

"Now one is a-wedding the Queen that was wooed of many a lord.
Wanton! that might not abide it, the mighty house to ward
Of her wedded man, and be steadfast till he got him aback thereto."

Thuswise would they be saying but nought of the deeds they knew.

But Odysseus the great-hearted, his very house within,
Goodwife Eurynome washed him, and with oil she sleeked his skin,
And about him cast a mantle most fair, and a kirtle meet.
But fairness shed Athene on the man from head to feet [hair,
That taller he showed, and bigger, and she wrought with his head and his
And set thick locks a-curling as the harebell bloom curls fair;

And as when some cunning craftsman o'erlays the silver with gold,
Some man whom Hephæstus hath taught craft-cunning manifold,
And Pallas Athene hath taught him, and lovely work he hath sped,
So loveliness about him on his head and his shoulders she shed,
And as he went up from the bath-vat like the Deathless his body did show,
So he sat him adown on the high-seat whence he had arisen e'en now,
Right over against his helpmeet, and spake, and the word he said:

"Strange woman! surely the people who hold the Olympian stead
Have set hard heart within thee above all womankind!
No other woman surely with such enduring mind
Had held aloof from her husband, who many a grief must bear,
To come back to the land of his fathers at last in the twentieth year.
But come, nurse, strew me a bed that I may lie alone,
For surely the heart within her of iron is fashioned and done."

But Penelope the heart-wise the word unto him spake:
"Strange man! I neither exalt me nor scorn of thee do I make,
Nor amazed am I out of measure, though I know what thou wert of yore,
When ye from Ithaca wended in the ship of the long-shaft oar.
But come now, Euryclea, strew him the bed close-laid
Without the well-built bride-room which he himself erst made,
Bring there the bed close-fashioned, and the bed-gear on it dight,
The fleeces and the mantles and the blankets gleaming bright."

Thus she spake to prove her husband; but Odysseus, grieved at heart,
Spake thus unto his bed-mate well-skilled in gainful art:
"O woman, thou sayest a word exceeding grievous to me!
Who hath otherwhere shifted my bedstead? full hard for him should it be,
For as deft as he were, unless soothly a very God come here,
Who easily, if he willed it, might shift it otherwhere.

But no mortal man is living, how strong soe'er in his youth,
Who shall lightly hale it elsewhere, since a mighty wonder forsooth
Is wrought in that fashioned bedstead, and I wrought it, and I alone.
In the close grew a thicket of olive, a long-leaved tree full-grown,
That flourished and grew goodly as big as a pillar about,
So round it I built my bride-room, till I did the work right out
With ashlar stones close-fitting; and I roofed it overhead,
And thereto joined doors I made me, well-fitting in their stead.
Then I lopped away the boughs of the long-leafed olive-tree,
And, shearing the bole from the root up full well and cunningly,
I planed it about with the brass, and set the rule thereto,
And shaping thereof a bed-post, with the wimble I bored it through.
So beginning, I wrought out the bedstead, and finished it utterly,
And with gold enwrought it about, and with silver and ivory,
And stretched on it a thong of oxhide with the purple dye made bright.
Thus then the sign I have shown thee; nor, woman, know I aright
If my bed yet bideth steadfast, or if to another place
Some man hath moved it, and smitten the olive-bole from its base."

So he spake, and her knees were loosened, and molten the heart in her [breast,
When she knew the soothfast tokens that her lord made manifest.
And weeping she ran straight to him, and cast her arms about
Odysseus' neck, and kissed him on his head, and thus spake out:

"Lour not on me, Odysseus! since in all things else beside
Thou art wisest of men; 'tis the Gods who have given us grief to abide,
For they grudged that we twain together should be dwelling each by each,
In the youth of our days rejoicing till the threshold of eld we should [reach.
But prithee be not angry, nor cast thy wrath on me,
That I held me back from caresses when first I looked on thee,
For ever the soul in my breast is full of shuddering fear

Lest some mortal man come hither and with words beguile me here ;
For many men are devising gains gotten evilly.
Nor yet would Argive Helen, Daughter of Zeus on high,
With an alien man have mingled in the bed and the loving deed,
Had she known that the warrior sons of Achæans her would lead
Aback again and homeward to her fatherland beloved.
Unto doing a deed unseemly the God that woman moved :
But she laid not to heart beforehand the heavy fateful woe
From whence the weight of sorrow over our lives too must go.
But since of our bed such tokens so certain and sure thou hast shown,
Which no one else of mortals hath seen but we alone,
Yea thou and I, and one handmaid that Actoris hath to name,
A thrall that my father gave me when hither home I came,
Who was door-ward for us of our bride-room built fair and solidly,
My soul thou overcomest, for as hard as it may be."

So she spake ; and desire of weeping she stirred in him the more,
As he held his wife well pleasing, the learned in gainful lore ;
And e'en as men a-swimming of the face of earth are fain,
Whose well-wrought ship Poseidon hath wrecked amidst the main,
Driven on by the blast of the storm-wind and the over-toppling seas ;
But forth from the hoary salt-sea they have fled, and few are these
Who have swum ashore, and their bodies with the brine are crusted around,
But because they have scaped the evil full fain they tread the ground,
E'en so was she fain of her husband that she looked upon at last ;
Nor wholly his neck would she loosen from her white arms round it cast.
And the Rosy-fingered Day-dawn on their tears had shone indeed.
But the Goddess, the Grey-eyed Athene, of other things had heed :
For the long night she held in his quarter, and the Gold-throned Dawn
From the yoking of her horses in Ocean did she stay ; [of Day,
They, the swift-foot whereby daylight to the sons of men is borne,

The Gleamer and the Glitterer, the foals that bring the morn.

So at last unto his bedmate spake Odysseus of many a rede:
"Not yet to the end of our labour, O wife, are we gotten indeed;
Abideth toil unmeasured, abundant, hard to be done;
And all this it behoveth that by me it should be won;
For even so the spirit of Tiresias foretold
On the day when I got me adown to the innermost Hades' hold,
That I for myself and my fellows homefare might seek and gain.
Now bedward go we, O woman, that now at last we twain,
Beneath the sweet sleep lying in all delight may be."

But therewith spake unto him heart-wise Penelope:
"The bed for thee there shall be whenso thy soul shall need,
Since now at last it befalleth that the Gods have given thee speed
Unto thine house well-builded and the land of thy fathers of old.
But since God in thy soul had set it, and thereof to me thou hast told,
Come tell me what is the labour, for hereafter it seemeth to me
I shall learn it; and nothing worser to know it as now shall it be."

But the many-counselled Odysseus to answering thus befell:
"Strange one! and why dost thou bid me and egg me on to tell?
Thereof then will I tell thee, nor hide the tale I have had.
But thy soul shall it not make joyous, nor yet thereof am I glad;
For unto many cities of mortals, and many lands
He bade me to go, and to carry a well-shaven oar in my hands,
Until with the men unwitting of the sea at last I meet;
Men who their victuals ever with salt unsavoured eat,
And wot no whit of the ships with the purple cheeks and fair,
Or the well-poised oars which ever are the wings which the ships do bear.
And he gave me a manifest token, which from thee I will not hide,

Whenever another wayfarer I shall meet as I wander wide,
Who shall say that a winnowing fan on my noble shoulder I bear,
He bade me make stay in that land and my oar to set up there,
And there to King Poseidon to hallow fair gifts divine,
A ram and a bull, and a boar which is the mate of the swine;
Then home to wend me, and hallow the gifts an hundredfold
Unto the Gods undying the heavens the wide that hold,
Unto all in order befitting. But my death from out of the sea
Shall come on me full softly, and shall make an end of me,
Worn out by eld the gentle, midst a blithe folk all about.
Such were the things that he told me should befall with never a doubt."

But unto him thus answered heart-wise Penelope:
"If the Gods indeed accomplish a better eld for thee,
Then hope there is ere the ending of deliv'rance from the bale."

So thus to one another they gave and took the tale;
But Eurynome in meanwhile and the nurse the bed did dight
With soft and dainty bed-gear by the gleaming torches' light.
But when the good bed they had strewn them in fashion diligent,
Then back again to the chamber to rest the old-wife went;
But Eurynome the bower-maid with torch in hand she led
The twain, as there they wended their ways unto the bed,
And she brought them unto the chamber, and departed, and they twain
Came unto the ancient order of their bed, and they were fain.

But Telemachus, and the neatherd and the swineherd from the play,
Of the dance their feet were staying, and the women did they stay.
And there in the shadowy chambers they gat them unto bed.

But when of love the lovely those twain their joy had fed,

Then they gladdened them with speech-tales that each to other told.
Told the glory of all women all she bore there to behold,
The baleful throng of the menfolk who wooing came thereto;
And how for her sake a many of kine and fat sheep they slew,
And the mighty drawing of wine from the casks that befel them then;
But Odysseus, Zeus-begotten, of the woes he had laid upon men,
And of all the toil he had toiled in, thereof he told her all;
And fain she hearkened his telling, nor yet did slumber fall
On her eyelids as she hearkened, till the tale was told to an end.
First he told how he quelled the Cicons, and how he thence did wend
Unto the fertile acres of the Lotus-eating men:
And all things that the Cyclops wrought him, and how he avenged him then
For his valiant folk devoured, who no pity there could find;
And his coming to Æolus' dwelling, who took and sped him kind,
Though nowise was he fated to his fatherland to come;
For the storm-wind fell on him, and tore him a long way aloof from his home,
And over the fishy sea-flood, lamenting mightily:
Then his coming to Telepylus the Læstrygon told he,
By whom was all his ship-host and his well-greaved folk undone,
And Odysseus' self escaped it in one black ship alone:
Then he told the tale of Circe and her manifold guileful snare;
And of how to the dark dank dwelling of Hades he must fare
In a many-benched ship, to seek aiding of the ghost of the Theban wight,
Tiresias: there of his fellows who had been had he sight,
And therewithal of the mother who bare him erst but young;
And he told of the great-voiced Sirens, how he heard the song they sung:
Of the Wandering Rocks and Charybdis the dire he told the tale,
And of Scylla, whom never have shipmen passed by and shunned her bale;
And how his fellows slaughtered the kine of the very Sun;
And how with his bolt the flame-fraught, the Lofty-thundering One,
E'en Zeus, their swift ship ruined, and how all his fair folk died,

Yea one and all together, while he 'scaped the evil tide;
And of how he came to Ogygia, and the Nymph Calypso the Fair,
Who longed for her lord to have him, and still would hold him there,
In her hollow rocky places; and cherished him, and she
Would make him undying unageing through all the days to be;
Yet nowise she persuaded the heart within his breast.
And he told how he came to Phæacia, toiling with all unrest,
Where unto their hearts they took him, and him in worship did hold
As a God, and shipped him, and sent him to his fatherland of old,
With gifts of gold and of brass, and abundant woven gear.

And this was his last word spoken, ere sweet Sleep, the Limb-looser,
Fell on him now, and his soul from cares and troubles freed.

But the Goddess, the Grey-eyed Athene, of other things had heed;
For as soon as she deemed that Odysseus was filled to his heart's content
With the very joy of the wife-bed, and his deep desire was spent,
Then straight she aroused from Ocean the Gold-throned Mother of Day,
To bring light to the sons of men; and Odysseus rose whence he lay
Amidst the soft bed, and fell speaking to his wife, and bade her thus:

"O wife, we have had our fill of labours plenteous;
For here hast thou been weeping for my homefare trouble-beset,
While Zeus and the other God-folk with woes have withheld me yet
From the land of the ancient fathers that so sore I desired to gain.
But since to the bed so longed for we are come at last, we twain,
That wealth of mine now heed thou whatso in my halls may be;
But as for the sheep which the Wooers o'erweening have slain for me
Full many a head myself will I lift, and a many more
The Achæans shall give, till our folds be full and running o'er.
Now up to my lands up-country, thick-wooded, will I fare,

To look on my noble father, who great grief for me doth bear.
Hereof, O wife, I charge thee, that thou be so wise an one:
For right soon shall arise the rumour with the coming of the sun
Of those same men of the Wooers that e'en now I slew in my halls.
So up to thy bower aloft do thou go with thy women thralls,
And sit, and look forth on no man, nor ask word for any to hear."

So he spake, and over his shoulders did on his goodly gear,
And Telemachus and the neatherd and the swineherd did he wake,
And bade them all their war-gear at once in hand to take;
And they nowise disobey him; but their breasts in the brass array,
And then open the doors and go forth; and Odysseus leadeth the way.
And by now was there light on the earth, but Athene hid them about
With night, and then from the city she speedily led them out.

BOOK XXIV.

ARGUMENT.

THE GHOSTS OF THE WOOERS ARE BROUGHT BY HERMES TO THE HOUSE OF HADES. ODYSSEUS MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN TO HIS FATHER LAERTES. EUPEITHES TAKES UP THE FEUD FOR HIS SON ANTINOÜS: HE IS SLAIN BY LAERTES, AND PEACE IS MADE BY THE WILL OF ZEUS AND ATHENE.

BUT now the ghosts of the men who were of the Wooers' band
Called forth Cyllenian Hermes; and he had his staff in hand,
Lovely and golden, wherewith he lulleth the eyes of men,
Whomsoever he willeth, while others from slumber he rouseth again.
Therewith he roused and drave them, who gibbering went along;
As when in the inmost ingle of a wondrous den the throng
Of night-bats gibbereth fluttering, when one falleth off aloof
From their chain, where clustered together they hang from the rocky roof,
So fared their flock a-twittering, and Hermes void of wrong
Adown the dusky highway led all the band along:
There by the streams of Ocean and the White Rock went their band,
By the gates of the Sun they wended and by the dream-folk's land,
Till in no long while they were gotten to the meads of asphodel,
Wherein the ghosts, the pictures of outworn men-folk, dwell.
And there the ghost of Achilles the Peleus child they met,
And Patroclus, and Antilochus the hero stainless yet,
And Ajax of his body the best of every one
Amid the Danaän people after Peleus' blameless son.

Round him then were they gathered: but drew anigh their host
Agamemnon son of Atreus, and mournful was his ghost;
And with him came others flocking; for all they thronged around
Who with him in the house Ægisthus their doom and death-day found.
So the ghost of the Son of Peleus first spake unto him there:

"Atrides, all we said it that thy days through thou wert dear
To Zeus the Fain-of-thunder above all men of war,
Since over men so many and so valiant, sway ye bore
In the folkland of the Trojans, where Achæans suffered woes;
But baleful fate, that no man once born on earth foregoes,
Was doomed to fall upon thee amidst thine early day.
Ah! would that all fain of thy glory wherewith thou bearedst sway
In the folkland of the Trojans thou hadst met thy death and doom,
Then all the folk of Achæans for thee had made the tomb,
And unto thy son hereafter had been great fame of thy deed:
But now—a death most piteous for thine ending was decreed."

But to him the ghost of Atrides thus spake a word to hear:
"O happy Son of Peleus! Achilles godhead's peer!
Who diedst afar from Argos in Troy; and round thee then
Were slain the sons of the Trojans and Achæans, best of men,
As over thee they battled: in the dustwhirl didst thou lie,
So mighty, so mightily fallen, all thy horse-lore heed gone by.
Yea, daylong there we battled; nor the battle had we stayed,
But if Zeus with the storm and the whirlwind an end of the fight had made.
So then from out of the battle to the ships we brought thee there,
And on the bed we laid thee, and washed thy body fair
With water warm and ointments, and adown did the Danaäns pour
The hot tears there above thee, and their hair for thee they shore. [sea
And thy mother came up from the seaflood with the deathless maids of the

When she had heard of the tidings, and wondrous the wail for thee
Rose up upon the sea-shore; and the Achæans every one
Fell trembling, and a-fleeing on their hollow ships had they gone,
Had Nestor not refrained them, who knew all ancient lore,
And whose counsel unto all men had oft seemed best before:
So he spake, that man of wisdom, and in this wise said he:

"'Hold, Argives! Swains of Achæans, hold now and nowise flee!
For now with her deathless sea-maids from out of the deep of the main
Hath the Mother come but to meet him, her son the newly-slain.'

"So he spake: and the high-heart Achæans refrained them of their fear;
And the Daughters of the Elder of the Salt-sea round thee were,
All piteously bewailing, and did on thee deathless weed;
And the Muses nine, none lacking, fell the burial lay to speed
With sweet replying voices; and no man without a tear
Might ye mark among the Argives. Rose the shrilly song and clear;
Seven days and ten unbroken, while day and night went by,
We wept, both the deathless Godfolk and the menfolk doomed to die.
The eighteenth to the fire we gave thee, and about thee there we slew
Many sheep of the flock the fattest, and the shambling beeves thereto.
Thou wert burned in the weed of the Gods mid ointments goodly store,
And honey sweet, and a many of Achæan men of war
In arms, both footmen and horsemen, went about the bale wherein
Thy body burned, and hugely all round uprose the din.
But when the flame of Hephæstus had burned thee all away,
Thy white bones, O Achilles, we gleaned at the dawn of the day
Into ointment and wine unwatered, and thy mother brought for thee
A two-eared golden vessel, and she gave it out for to be
The gift of Dionysus by all-famed Hephæstus made;
Therein, O glorious Achilles, the white bones of thee we laid,

Mingled with dead Patroclus, son of Menœtias;
But aloof from Antilochus, he who of thee most worshipped was
Of all thy fellows, saving Patroclus dead and gone.
Then the tomb we heaped around them, a great and a goodly one,
We the holy host of the Argives, and the folk that the battle abide,
On a ness that thrusteth forward o'er Hellespont the wide,
That afar it might be beholden of men that sail the sea,
Both of them that now are living and them that yet shall be.
But thy Mother, the Gods beseeching, laid prizes the goodliest
In the midmost lists for the winning of Achæans of the best.
— Full oft ere now hast thou happed on a warrior's burying,
When the swains are gathered together about some perished king,
And they gird them there, and array them for the winning of the prize.
But hereat indeed hadst thou wondered at the sight before thine eyes,
Such prizes and so goodly gave the Goddess for thee there,
E'en the silver-footed Thetis: for still to the Gods wert thou dear.
So thy name dieth not with thy dying, but evermore shall abide
Thy fair fame, O Achilles, amongst all men far and wide.
But what joy unto me abideth that I wound up the spindle of strife,
When under the hands of Ægisthus, and of her my baleful wife,
Zeus e'en on the day of my homefare did my baleful bane devise."

But while to one another they spake in e'en such wise
There drew anigh unto them the Flitter, the Argus-bane,
Leading the souls of the Wooers at the hands of Odysseus slain,
And they wondered when they beheld them, and straight they went thereto.
But the ghost of Agamemnon the son of Atreus knew
Melaneus' son belovèd, Amphimedon great of fame;
For his guest had he been when aforetime to his Ithacan house he came.

So the ghost of the Son of Atreus was the first with the speech-word then:

"Amphimedon, what bane brings you, all chosen, like-aged men,
'Neath the dark earth to journey? No better band than this
Of the best of men might we choose us of any town that is.
As ye sailed on the ships did Poseidon o'erwhelm you utterly,
The bitter winds arousing, and long billows of the sea?
Or did it befall that the foemen your bane on the mainland gave,
As ye cut off the herds of their neat or their goodly sheep-flocks drave,
Or about some city's women would the fight that ye fell in be?
Come, tell me the tale since I ask it, for I call me the guest-friend of thee.
For dost thou not remember how I came to thine house and home
With the godlike Menelaüs, to urge on Odysseus to come,
And along with us unto Ilios in the well-decked ship to wend?
Nor over the main had we gotten before a whole month's end,
Since hardly thereto Odysseus the Waster of Cities we won."

Then unto him fell speaking the ghost of Amphimedon:
"O King of folk, Agamemnon, most glorious Atreus' seed,
Thou Zeus-child! all thou tellest I remember well indeed,
And every whit and clearly the tale to thee will I tell
Of our death and our evil ending, in what wise it befel.

"We wooed the wife of Odysseus, the lord so long away,
And unto that loathly wedding said she neither yea nor nay,
But the black doom and the deathday devised for us the while;
Yea in our heart she devised us moreover this same guile;
With a web that was great and mighty her loom in the house did she gear,
A fine web, full of measure, and thus bespake us there:

"'O younglings, ye my Wooers, since the godlike Odysseus is dead,
Await ye abiding the wedding till I to an end have sped
This cloth, for fear the warp-threads should waste and come to nought.

Tis a shroud for the lord Laertes 'gainst the day when he shall be caught
At the last by the baleful doom of Death, the Outstretcher of men :
Lest the women of Achæans through the folk should blame me then,
— Lo the man of many possessions he lieth lacking a shroud ! '

So she spoke, for the while prevailing o'er our hearts the high and proud,
And thenceforth o'er that web the mighty by daylight still she wrought,
But ever by night undid it when the candles thereto she had brought.
Three years she beguiled the Achæans, and the thing by guile did hide,
But when came on the fourth year and the seasons came in their tide,
By all the waning of moons and the many days fulfilled,
Then one of the women told us, who in the guile was skilled,
And we found her there unweaving the noble web of cloth ;
And so to an end must she bring it perforce and exceeding loth.
[done,
" So when she had shown us the cloth, and the great web had woven and
And had washed it, and like to the sun or the moon before us it shone,
In that while some baleful God from somewhither Odysseus led
Unto the lands up-country, where the swineherd dwelt in his stead,
Whither came the loved son of Odysseus, the godlike, making the land
In his black ship out from Pylos the country of the sand.
There then the twain for the Wooers did the bale of death forecast
And came on to the glorious city ; of whom was Odysseus the last ;
But thitherward before him the way did Telemachus lead ;
And the swineherd brought on Odysseus all clad in loathly weed,
Most like to a wretched beggar, and a staff-carle very old ;
And woeful was the raiment that his body did enfold ;
And not one of us might know him, for the man amidst us there
Come to hand upon a sudden, nay, not those that the first-born were.
And with evil words we chid him, and cast at him furthermore
But there in the halls of his house with hardy heart he bore

All things for a while; both the pelting of strokes and the bitter word;
Till the counsel of Zeus the Shielded the mind within him stirred,
And, with Telemachus aiding, the lovely arms took he
And laid them by in the chamber, and shut the door with a key.
Then out of his guile exceeding he bade his wife to lay
The bow before the Wooers, and therewith the iron grey,
For a strife to us ill-fated, well-spring of bane and bale.
And no man there amongst us o'er the huge bow might prevail
To stretch his string: might failed us a long way for the same.
But when into the hands of Odysseus at last the great bow came,
Then all we cried together, and with our words forbade
To give the bow unto him for all the words he made.
But Telemachus only urged him, and gave him straight command.
And when Odysseus the toil-stout the goodly had got it in hand,
Then lightly the bow he bended, and shot the iron through: [strew,
And leapt up and stood on the threshold: then to earth the shafts did he
Glaring terribly around him: and King Antinoüs
He shot, and then, straight aiming, those shafts the dolorous
He loosed upon the others, and each o'er each they fell.

"And then that one of the Gods was their helper knew we well,
For thereon through all the feast-hall they followed on us close,
And on either hand they slaughtered, and the loathly groans arose,
And the din of the cleaving of skulls, and the blood drowned all the floor:

"So died we, Agamemnon, and our bodies furthermore
In the halls of the house of Odysseus, uncared they lie therein;
For in the house of each one thereof nought knoweth our kin [shed,
That they might wash from off us the black blood that our hurts have
And lay us adown with wailing—all the honour of the dead."

But the ghost of the Son of Atreus made answer thereupon:
"O many-wiled Odysseus! Laertes' happy son!
A wife of worth abundant hast thou surely gotten thee;
So good is the heart of the noble, of that Penelope,
Icarius' child; who ever had her lord in memory,
E'en Odysseus: so the glory of her worth shall never die;
But forsooth a lovely story the Deathless Ones shall make
For all the Earth-abiders for Penelope's wise sake.
Nought such was Tyndareus' Daughter, who devised a deed of bale,
To slay her wedded husband: loathly shall be her tale
Amid menfolk, and hereafter yet the ill report shall dwell
On each woman of the women, e'en on her that doeth well."

In such wise with each other held they converse face to face
As they stood in the House of Hades, down in earth's hidden place.
But those others went forth from the city; they quickly came their ways
To the well-arrayed land of Laertes, which he himself in his days
For himself had won: for much toil thereover did he abide,
And there was his house, and about it were the bowers on every side,
Wherein the thralls of his homemen were wont to sleep and dwell,
E'en they who ever wrought him such work as liked him well.
And a goodwife, Sicilian moreover, dwelt underneath that roof,
To have a care of the elder in the field from the city aloof.

So now to his son and the homemen to speech Odysseus fell:
"Do ye yourselves now enter the house that is builded well,
And slaughter at once for your dinner which swine may be best thereto;
But for me, I will make trial of my father, what he will do,
Whether he with his eyes will mark me and know me for his son,
Or know me not, such a long while and so far as I have been gone."

So saying, unto the homemen he gave his battle-gear,
And they hasted into the house. But Odysseus drew anear
The fruit-abounding vineyard the foresaid proof to win:
But down to the great garth going he nowise found therein
Either Dolius, he or his sons, or one homeman; gone were all those
To gather them thorns for a hedge to set round the vineyard close;
And he, Dolius the elder, was leading them all on the road.

So his father he found, who alone in the ordered garth abode,
About a vine-stock digging: in a kirtle foul was he clad,
All patched and right unseemly; and bound round his legs he had
Greaves clouted, wrought of oxhide, the scratching thorns to shun,
And gloves on his hands 'gainst the brambles; and on his head was done
A goatskin hood. In such wise did he eke out sorrow there.

But when the goodly Odysseus, the toil-stout, saw him fare
All worn with eld, and laden with such grief of heart withal,
He shed the tears thereover as he stood 'neath a pear-tree tall.
And then indeed to pondering in his mind and mood he fell,
Whether he should kiss his father, and embrace him about, and tell
All the tale of how he was gotten to his fatherland again;
Or whether of all he should ask him and try him there amain.
And unto him so thinking it seemed the gainfuller part
To try him at first for a while with words that were hard to his heart.

With that thought the goodly Odysseus went up to him speedily,
And he held his head still downward and digged about the tree.
So standing anigh unto him, thus spake his son renowned:
"Old man, no lore thou lackest in dighting thy garden ground,
And well thine heed availeth; for there is nothing here,
No shoot, no fig or vine-stock, no apple-tree or pear,

And no plot of herbs in the garden, that lacketh the care of thee.
But one thing will I tell thee, nor wroth let thy spirit be:
This same good care thou lackest, and both eld thou hast indeed
Full woeful, and art squalid and clad in loathly weed.
Yet thy master's heeding thee nothing is nought for thy sloth, I trow,
For nought thrall-like in thy body and thy bigness dost thou show.
But like to the Kings thou seemest: yea, thou seemest unto me
Like to one who, when he hath washen and eaten as should be,
Should fall to sleeping softly, as meet for elders it is.
But do me to wit of one thing, and straightly tell me this,
Of what man art thou the bondsman, and whose garden tendest thou?
And hereof, too, tell me duly that soothly the thing I may trow,
If verily I am gotten to Ithaca, e'en as he said,
A man that e'en now I fell in with, as I made my way to the stead.
A man scarce wise of his wit; since indeed he endured not I wis
To tell me all, or to hearken my word when I asked him of this,
Concerning my friend, if he liveth and yet abideth to-day,
Or is dead, and unto the houses of Hades hath wended away.
But one thing am I saying, and heed thou my word and hear;
A man erewhile I guested in my fatherland the dear,
Who came to our house: and never a more welcome guest hath come
Of all the guests of the aliens who hath sought unto my home.
But from Ithaca claimed he kinship, and moreover did declare
That Laertes Arceisius son was the father of him there.
So him to the house did I lead, and there I guested him well
With heedful love, when a many as then in the house did dwell;
And guest-gifts there I gave him, e'en such as were meet to be given:
Forsooth of gold well fashioned I gave him talents seven;
And a mixing-bowl I gave him all silver and flowery,
And twelve single cloaks moreover, and twelve shifts of tapestry,
And as many goodly mantles and the kirtles 'longing thereto.

And therewithal four women deft lovely work to do,
And shapely of their bodies, whom he chose out for his own."

Then answered him his father as he shed the tears adown:
"Ye are come to the land, O stranger, whereof thou wouldst be told,
But men insolent and wanton as now the lordship hold.
And those numberless gifts of thy giving but vainly didst thou give.
For if in the Ithacan folkland thou hadst found that man alive,
Then indeed with a good return of thy gifts had he sent thee away,
And with goodly guesting, as meet is for him who beginneth the play.
But come now, tell me of this, and clear let thine answer be:
How many years have worn by since thou guestedst this man with thee,
Thine hapless friend, and my son ill-fated?—if ever he were—
Whom somewhere afar from his friends and his fatherland the dear
In the sea have the fishes devoured, or the birds and the beasts have got
For a prey upon the mainland; and his mother bewailed him not,
Nor shrouded him round, nor his father—e'en we that begat him, e'en we!—
Nor his wife of the many gifts, wise-witted Penelope,
Did bewail her lord on his death-bier, as meet and right it is,
Nor close his eyes; and due honour to the dead is even this.
But now do thou tell me truly that I may wot it well,
Whence art thou of men, thy begetters and the town where thou dost dwell,
And where the ship is lying that erewhile brought thee here
Along with thy godlike fellows: or alone perchance didst thou fare
Upon the ship of others who, landing thee, went on their way?"

Then Odysseus the many-counselled thuswise did answer and say:
"Yea, soothly, of all these matters will I tell thee clearly, and well.
Out of Alybas come I, wherein in a noble house I dwell.
The son of Apheidas am I, who was King Polypemon's son,
And Eperitus have I to name: now some God drave me on

From Sicania to come hither, and all against my will.
By the field far aloof from the city my ship is lying still.
But as for Odysseus, this year is the fifth year come to hand
From the day when thence he departed, and left my father's land
Ill-fated; yet fair flew the fowl when he went, on the right hand they were.
So fain was I thereover when I sped him forth to fare;
And fain was he departing, and hope in our hearts was alive
To mingle yet in friendship, and glorious gifts to give."

So he spake; but a black cloud of sorrow wrapped the elder of days around,
And straight he took up two-handed the dusky dust from the ground,
And over his hoar head poured it, groaning full heavily.
But stirred was the heart of Odysseus, and the sharp grief rose on high,
And beat against his nostrils as he looked on his father's woe,
And he fell on him and embraced him, and kissed him and spake so:

"I am he of whom thou askest, O father! yea, I am here,
Come back to the land of my fathers at last in the twentieth year;
And now refrain thee of wailing, and cease thy tearful woe,
For all straight out will I tell thee, though needs must we hasten now.
Lo now! I have slain the Wooers within our house and hall,
And avenged me of mocking and heart-grief, and their ill deeds once for [all."

Therewith Laertes answered, and in this wise spake he:
"If thou art indeed Odysseus, my child, come home to me,
Then tell me a manifest token that in thee I may surely trow."

Spake then the wise Odysseus, and in such wise answered now:
"Lo first this weal I show thee for thine eyen to behold, [old.
Which the boar with his white tooth furrowed when I went on Parnassus of
But thou and my mother beworshipped, ye sent me that journey to make

To Autolycus her father, that I the gifts might take
Which when he came hither he promised, and he swore to give me those.
Then come, till I tell thee the trees in this well-ordered close,
Which thou gavest me erst for mine own, when I but a little one
Was going with thee through the garden, and asking of all that was done,
And through them we went, and thou namedst them, and toldest me all about
And thirteen pear-trees ye gave me, and a half score apple-trees, [these,
And of figs two score; and thou namedst withal the fifty rows
Of vines that thou wouldst give me; and in turn bore each of those,
Because indeed grape-bunches there flourished divers and great
When the seasons of Zeus from the heavens laid on them load of weight."

Therewith failed the knees of the elder, and failed the heart in his breast,
When he knew the soothfast tokens that his son made manifest,
And he cast his arms about him, his child belovèd well,
And the toil-stout goodly Odysseus took him, fainting as he fell.
But when his breath he had gotten, and his soul came aback to his heart,
Again with words he bespake him, and answered for his part:

"Zeus father! Still the Gods dwell up in Olympus on high,
If the Wooers indeed have paid us for their wanton mastery;
But sore in my mind I fear me lest they speedily hasten here,
All the Ithacan men, and moreover speed tidings everywhere
Throughout all steads and cities of the Cephellenian men."

But the many-counselled Odysseus in this wise answered again:
"Heart up! nor let these matters on thy mind for a trouble lie;
But go we forth to the house that standeth the orchard anigh;
For I sent on Telemachus thither, and the swineherd and herd of the neat,
That they as swiftly as may be should array for us all the meat."

But with those words they wended along to the houses fair,
And when at last they were gotten to the house well-builded there,
Therein Telemachus found they, and the herds of the neat and the swine,
Shearing much flesh into gobbets and blending the dark-red wine.
And that while Laertes the great-heart, within his house and hall
That wife Sicilian washed him, and sleeked him o'er withal,
And did a fair cloak on him; but Athene came to him,
And made that People's Shepherd greater in every limb,
That mightier he was than aforetime, and bigger to look upon.
So up from the bath he wended, and wondered his well-loved son
When he saw him like in aspect to the Gods that never die:
So then he spake unto him, and let the winged words fly:

"O father, now one of the Gods that are for evermore
Hath made thy body and bigness e'en better than heretofore."

Then answered Laertes the heedful, and spake a word to hear:
"Would to Father Zeus and Athene and Apollo that such I were
As when Nericus well-builded, the burg on the mainland's head,
I took, and the Cephellenians as their battle-king I led.
That e'en such I had stood beside thee in our own house yesterday,
With war-gear on my shoulders to aid in the battle-play
Against the men of the Wooers! There then in thine house and hall
Had I loosed the knees of many, and rejoiced thine heart withal."

But while each unto the other such things as this they said,
The others toiled and ceased not, and the banquet ready made;
And they set them down in order on bench and high-seat there,
And they laid their hands to the victual. But therewith now drew anear
Dolius the elder, and with him the sons of that elder withal,
From their work afield a-wearied, whom their mother had gone to call,

That Sicilian wife that gave them their meat, and the home-man old
In diligent fashion cherished, since eld had him in its hold.
But when these saw Odysseus, and their minds considered him well,
They stood in the hall astonished; but to speech Odysseus fell,
And in soothing wise bespake them, and such words before them set:

"Sit down to meat, O elder, and your wonderment forget;
For the meat have we long been yearning to lay hands upon the same,
And here in the hall have abided, expecting till ye came."

So he spake; but forth ran Dolius with both his hands stretched out,
And caught hold of Odysseus and kissed him on his hands and his wrists about,
And therewithal bespake him, and e'en such words spake he:

"Since thou art come back, belovèd, to us that longed for thee,
Yet never looked to see it, and the Gods thy ways have led,
All hail! all hail! may the Godfolk give thee life's goodlihead!
But tell me one thing truly that I may know it well;
Doth Penelope the wise-heart know of this tale to tell,
And how thou art returnèd, or the tidings shall we speed?"

But therewith spake in answer Odysseus of many a rede:
"Old man, she knoweth already: what need thereof to care?"

So again the other sat him adown in the polished chair.
And in turn did the sons of Dolius round Odysseus the mighty stand,
And in words they gave him greeting and clasped him hand in hand,
And then sat them adown in order by their father Dolius there.

Thus then in the halls, of their victual did these men have a care.

But swift Fame fared as a herald through the city on every side,
With the foul fall of the Wooers and the fate whereby they died;
And men heard it altogether and thronged from everywhere,
And about the house of Odysseus in wail and woe they were;
And they bore out the dead from the house, and each buried his own
And those from other cities, home did they send them all; [withal.
And on the swift ships laid them for the fisher-folk to bear.
Then flock-meal they fared to the meeting and sore at heart they were.
But when they were gotten together and the meeting of men was made,
Then amidst them arose Eupeithes, and the word before them laid.
For unhealable yet in his heart the grief for Antinoüs lay,
His son, whom the goodly Odysseus of the Wooers first did slay;
So he spake in the meeting of men sore weeping because of his son:
[done,
"Friends, a great deed 'gainst the Achæans is this that this man hath
For some in his ships he flitted, and valiant and many were they,
And the hollow ships they perished and the people passed away;
And he came here to slaughter others of Cephellenians the best.
So come ye ere this man swiftly get off in Pylos to rest,
Or unto Elis the Holy, where Epeian men are lords.
Wend we, lest shame enduring shall burden us afterwards,
And this thing be for a shame e'en for folk unborn to hear,
That we avenged not the slaying of our sons and our brethren dear:
Then to me at least nought happy would life be unto my heart;
But dying as soon as might be with the dead would I have my part.
Then go we, lest they forego us, and across to the mainland fare."

So spake he weeping, and pity gat hold of the Achæans there.
But now the godlike minstrel and Medon came thereto,
From the feast-hall of Odysseus, now Sleep had let them go.

And they stood there in the midmost and wonder seized each man,
And Medon learned in wisdom thuswise the word began :

" O men of Ithaca, hearken ! for not without the will
Of the Deathless Gods did Odysseus these deeds of his fulfil :
Yea, I myself saw an Immortal of the Gods, who stood anear
Odysseus, and like unto Mentor in all wise did it appear.
And this Deathless God, one while in front of Odysseus appeared,
And heartened him on ; and again the folk of the Wooers he scared,
To flee through the house in terror ; and there each upon each did they [fall."
So he spake ; and at his speaking the pale fear crept o'er all.
But the old lord Halitherses, and Alastor's son was he,
Took up the word ; and he only things past and to come could see,
Who now of goodwill bespake them, and a word before them laid :

" Hearken now, Ithacan men, to the word that of me shall be said :
O friends, 'tis your dastard doings made these evil matters to be ;
For neither to Mentor the folk-herd would ye hearken, nor yet unto me,
When your sons we would be staying of their witless ways of nought ;
Who in their baleful folly deeds huge and monstrous wrought,
Eating the wealth and shaming the wife of the noblest of men,
Whereas ye would still be saying, he shall never come back again.
So thuswise be the matter, and the word of my speaking obey,
Nor go ye, lest any meet evil self-made upon the way."

So he spake ; but the more part of them rose up with a mighty cry,
While the others gathered together abode there steadfastly,
For his word they liked in nowise, but Eupeithes did they hear
More gladly : so then straightly they ran to their battle-gear.

But when upon their bodies the gleaming brass they had done,
Then were they gathered flock-meal before the wide-wayed town,
And the host amidst their folly forth did Eupeithes lead,
For he thought to avenge the slaying of his son: but never indeed
Should he get him aback; but thereby should hap on his doom and his [death.
Now to Zeus the son of Cronos Athene speaketh and saith:
"O father, O son of Cronos, O Highest of all that is high,
Tell me, the asker, what hidden in the deep of thine heart doth lie?
Whether ill war yet thou wilt fashion, and the fearful battle din,
Or wilt make loving-kindness between them, and all they to dwell [therein?"
Then Zeus the Cloud-pack's Herder thus fell to answer and speak:
"O child, why ask ye closely, and an answer thus would seek?
For was not this thy counsel, and thine heart's devising then,
That thither should come Odysseus, and avenge him on these men?
So do e'en as thou wilt. But I show the meetest end of the strife:
Since the holy Odysseus hath wreaked him on the Wooers of his wife,
Let them strike true oath, and henceforward to the end let him be king:
And the slaying of their children, and their brethren, e'en this thing
Shall we make them forget, and in kindness shall they dwell as heretofore;
And good peace shall be amongst them and of wealth abundant store."

So he spake, and urged on Athene, who before longed eagerly,
And she went on her ways, down-rushing from Olympus' peaks on high.

But when of the longing for meat heart-soothing an end those had made,
The toil-stout goodly Odysseus took up the word and said:
"Let some one go forth and espy lest anigh they be drawing, those men."

So he spake; but a son of Dolius straight did his bidding then,
And went on the threshold and stood there, and saw them all anigh,
And unto Odysseus straightway he let the winged word fly:
"Yea, verily are they at hand; so arm we now in speed."

So therewith, at the word, they arose, and did on their battle-weed:
And Odysseus and his, they were four; and six Dolius sons there were.
And with them Laertes and Dolius did on the battle-gear,
For all that they were hoary, and warriors pressed by need.
But when they had done on their bodies the gleaming brazen weed,
Then they opened the doors and went forth; and Odysseus led the band.
Then came the Daughter of Zeus, Athene, nigh to hand,
In Mentor's very likeness of body and of voice,
Whom the toil-stout valiant Odysseus beholding, failed not to rejoice;
And unto Telemachus spake he, and said to his well-loved son:

"Telemachus, now shalt thou learn it thyself, as thou fallest on,
In the tide when men are battling and the best are chosen of worth,
Not to shame the race of thy fathers; we, who over all the earth
Have excelled all other menfolk in manhood and in might."

But Telemachus the heedful thus answered him forthright:
"O father beloved, if thou willest, in my heart shalt thou look, and see
No shaming of the fathers whereof thou toldest me."

So he spake, and glad was Laertes, and thus he speaketh now:
"Kind Gods! what day is this day, wherein so glad I grow,
Wherein my son and my son's son in manly valour vie!"

Then unto him spake Athene, the Grey-eyed, standing a-nigh:
"Arceisius' son, of my fellows the lievest and most dear,

Unto the Grey-eyed Maiden and Zeus father speed the prayer,
Then swing up thy spear long-shafted, and poise and cast outright."

So spake she, Pallas Athene, and breathed into him great might;
And unto the Daughter of Zeus the mighty made he his prayer,
And aloft he swung thereafter and cast the long-shaft spear,
And therewith smote Eupeithes on the helm of the cheeks of brass;
Which kept not out the spear-head; right through and through did it pass,
And clashing he fell, and above him his war-gear rattled thereon:
And Odysseus set on their forefront along with his glorious son,
And smote with the edge of the sword and the two-tyned spear in the [play;
And there all those had they slaughtered and taken their homefare away,
But if the Daughter of Zeus, the Lord of the Shield of the Goat,
Had withheld not the folk, and refrained them with the mighty voice
of her shout:

"O Ithacan men, withhold you at last from the bitter war!
That speedily ye may be parted and shed the blood no more!"

So Athene spake, and upon them therewith fell the pale bleak fear,
And from their hands in their terror down dropped the battle-gear,
And unto the earth down tumbled, as the Goddess cried o'er the strife.
Then unto the town they turned them in longing for dear life.
But the toil-stout goodly Odysseus cried out with a dreadful cry
And swooped on, gathered together as the erne that aloft doth fly;
But even therewith Cronion cast a bolt of flaming fire,
That fell before the Grey-eyed, the Maid of a mighty Sire,
And unto Odysseus the Grey-eyed Athene cried and said:

"Odysseus of many a wile, Laertes' son, Zeus-bred,

Withhold thee now! with the strife of the balanced battle be done!
Lest Zeus be wroth against thee, the loud-voiced Cronos' son."

So Athene spake, and he hearkened, and glad at heart obeyed.
And oath and troth thereafter betwixt the twain she laid,
She, Pallas Athene, the Daughter of the Lord of the Shield of Fear,
In the likeness of Mentor's body, with a voice like his to hear.

THE END.

LONDON:
Printed by Strangeways & Sons, Tower Street, Cambridge Circus.

ANDREW LOG